JOLIET
JUNIOR
COLLEGE
GROWING
AND
BECOMING
Kim Vollmer '89

WORDEATER 70 STAFF:

sue cherven, bob loewe, maria mellinger, nels nelson, john stobart, david l. sullivan, kim vollmer

In order to get a selection published in this issue, four of the above had to vote for acceptance. For the award winners, only John Stobart is responsible.

Manuscripts or cover designs for

wordeater 71

must be submitted to John Stobart in room C-1069 by:

February 23, 1990

Manuscripts will not be returned and should by typed.

AWARDS

POETRY

$10 to Sherry Gunderman

PROSE

$10 to Sherry Gunderman
$10 to Norma Dodge
$ 5 to Rich Goberville

COVERS

$20 to Kim Vollmer

Next Deadlines:
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Dawn Simmons

WINDOW WATCHING

Snowflakes gathered
to dance on my windowsill.
They waited
but heard no applause.

J. Ardith Cox

HEADLINES

"Three-Year-Old Boy trapped in Apartment Blaze"
"Hurricane Claims 250 Carolina Residents"
"Quake Rattles California; 75+ Death Toll"
--These lives were taken away.--

"Two Teen Found Dead: Carbon Monoxide Responsible"
"Hollywood Star Loses Life To AIDS Virus"
"U. S. Abortions Reach All-Time High In '87"
--These lives were given away.--

J. Ardith Cox

HOME-I-CIDE

A man
takes the life of a human being.
Now he
eats full meals twice a day...
sleeps in a warm bed every night...
wears clean clothing...
and lives behind bars.

Another
loses his job to modern technology.
Now he
eats rubbish out of garbage cans...
sleeps on yesterday's news...
wears discarded clothing...
and lives in a cardboard box.

--Prisons are like mansions to the homeless.--

Shonda Talerico

OBSESSION

Leaves jumping from the trees
In their autumn suicide.
I won't waste another minute crying.

But the lights are going out.
I start again.

You are gone,
I can't let you go
I want to hold you in this darkness.

It was only late last night
I knew we were through
When I began to know
That you believed it, too.

I say I don't love you,
But I'm watching the past
Play in my mind
Like a lonely album
Repeating the groove.

Was it love?

Preserving you by my side,
I dust off the glass shards
Appearing when I smashed you
Against the wall,
I hold your copy close to my heart.

Laughing to myself,
I will make this spell last forever,

In the bed of my life,
We've got all night.

When I think about it all
As I spin the loaded chamber.

Paul Pritchett

EXPERIMENT 538-4A

This is a story. The story begins by introducing the main characters. The characters engage in some humorous, romantic, sad, melancholy, angry, passionate, sexual, tiresome, boring, crazy, and monotonous times. I introduce another character who tries to stop them. He/she/they fail. The characters grow old and die

Nels Nelson

FROM DOCUMENTARY

The old womenmen took their laundry out to the stones,
The holy stones by the river,
As some red-grey cold slimed in and set itself down
In everyone's head,
Every one's head.
They all smiled, how pure they looked.
They exorcised demons from pants and shirts,
Beating them on the rocks.
Spare the rod and spoil...
Cleanliness is next to...
What is so wonderful about being next to?
Now let me set something straight for myself, excuse me,
It'll take a second.
Man created God in his image?
Oh bother, we do worship in peculiar ways,
Maybe I need a nap.
I want to beat up my clothes clean,
I'm not kidding now, something is missing,
God is not in our washing machine.

Sherry Gunderman

IMAGERY

Blueprints
of a mansion
and teardrops
of a grown child
Show a world
of love and hate
joy and sorrow
for what it truly is.

Sherry Gunderman

NINETEEN-EIGHTY-SIX

The moon
chased us
as our car passed cornfields
and farmhouses.
We hid from the future
and ignored the past.
Our juvenile sides surfaced
and we played tag
in the dusty arena
of the stable.
We scared each other
with ghost stories
that we had secretly exaggerated
and laughed at our pretended fright.
The music from our generation
echoed from the car speakers
as we waited for the heater to kick in
and we carved a jack-o-lantern together,
playing surgeon,
and throwing orange intestines at each other.
We whispered "goodnight"
at your door
and the wind blew our icy-white words
away down the street.
And my heart ached with supreme happiness
at the fact that it HAD been a "Good Night,"
and that perfection wasn't reserved
strictly for the Mature.

Norma Dodge

GROSSLY EUPHEMISTIC

To fart is to flatulate,
To spit is to expectorate,
To puke is to regurgitate,
To belch is to eructate,
To piss is to urinate,
To shit is to defecate,
To f___ is to copulate.

Fart, spit, puke, shit,
Piss and belch and f____.
The first six are only natural
As for the last--good luck!

Sherry Gunderman

THE PAPERBACK

She went into the bookstore. He followed her at a safe distance--so much so that she didn't know she was being trailed. He stood by the magazines and watched her scan through the fiction. She went to the information desk, and he ducked behind the cards and figurines. He eavesdropped terribly.

"Do you have A Room With A View by E. M. Forster?" she inquired of the clerk.

"Did you..." and he began to motion with his arm.

"No." she interrupted. "It wasn't in the fiction."

"We don't have it then. I haven't seen it around since the movie. Do you want me to order it for you?" he asked politely while his eyebrows danced with expression.

"No, thank you," she replied, and turned to leave. She hesitated to say goodbye to the kind salesperson.

"Bye-bye now!" and the information man waved. She began to leave. He went to the information desk.

"A Room With A View?" he questioned. His question was insensible, but was somehow translated by the man behind the desk.

"It's a love story about an English couple at the turn of the centuy. It's wonderful. The movie's fantastic." And he walked away humming.

He took a call card and wrote the title on it. Setting the pen that he used down, he turned to leave. She was standing in the doorway. She had heard everything and observed it all. He studied his shoes in brief embarrassment. She smiled a genuine smile meant for him alone, and disappeared into the bustle of the mall crowds.

Sherry Gunderman

APRIL

Yes.
Maybe.
Definitely
not.
Today. Tonight.
Calculations.
A green pen.
Michigan State University.
No.
Old song. Old tune.
Nonexistent.
Are my paintings still in your room?
Your face haunts me.
Your memories tease me.
He is more
than you could dream to be.
He
is brilliant
and witty.
But not as funny...as you.
Green pen.
Red eyes.
Yellow sun.
Blue tears.
Full--for memory.

Maria Mellinger

MY SARCASTIC SUMMER

My sarcastic summer
1942
Sleep was death's brother
And I joined you,
Draft-bait,
In dreams.

Dawn Simmons

WHEN AUTUMN PASSED

Before my steps
could crunch the leaves
the wind
took them away.
In my mind I knew
they had to go;
In my heart
I wished they would stay.

Judy Belfield

THE FIRST OF OCTOBER

This day soft yellow
slides through the blinds
lengthwise
gently oozes through the slats
like a whispered prayer.
A confession
lies in my memory
as silken as the morning's fingers.
We are afraid
of sudden moves--
the sunlight and I.
Remembering yesterdays
pierced with shrieks
in the darkness
spattered with blood
we glide carefully--
a slow-motion rippling of chiffon
through time
we've yet to know.
Now soft, now yellow,
words rest in the soul
jaundiced with disease.

Maria Mellinger

MAKING WISHES

Making wishes
With small change--
A well full of pennies
And hopeless unneeded nickels--
Somewhere,
The tally is being kept,
And maybe the millionth customer
Will be satisfied.

Joseph M. Nahas

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
It's that time of year.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
The kids are full of cheer.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
Here comes that fat ol' man.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
Ringing the bell in his mittened hand.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
He asked me for some dough.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
I kneed him down below.

Judy Belfield

BIRTHDAY

Sunlight bows low
in a blaze
and winks into purple black.
Redheaded trees
toss their October tresses
in sudden whips of wind.
My breath, suspended for a moment,
returns with Melancholy,
a lifelong companion
which has been absent this time
for what seemed would be
forever.
Inevitably, it comes back.
Only last week I daydreamed
what it might be like
to take someone's breath away...
there is no real connection here---
my thoughts often slip
from a word today
to something yesterday cannot release.
A choking sadness
asks me to consider
the beauty of this day
and wonder who will not be here
to see it again next year
and why.

Jacque Klika

BEFORE THE DAWN

Strings of twinkling colored lights
magically reflected the joy
of robe clad children.
Tiptoeing
before the dawn
they crept
silently
one
Christmas morn.

Jacque Klika

AFTER THE TIDE GOES OUT

There was a time once,
long ago,
when I thought
I knew you.
We kicked off our shoes
and walked through
tide pools near the
sea. And sometimes
we'd venture to the
shore and play tag
with waves hitting
the sandy beach.
But always we were
hand in hand.
Together we faced the
quiet peaceful times
as well as the challenging
moments that added spark.
Always we found meaning
in the times we shared and so now I wonder
if our love was but an illusion
...as the moon beams
dancing
over rippling waters, but
then moving on.
Will I have nothing left
but memories...like shells left
upon the shore after the tide goes out.

J. Ardith Cox

EXHAUSTED

I'm tired of trying
To catch the dreams I'll never get.
I'm tired of crying
About the goals not reached, but set.

I'm tired of holding
The bits of life I know must go.
I'm tired of molding
The perfect world I'll never know.

I'm tired of waiting
For paths to change and come my way.
I'm tired of hating
The shameful words I sometimes say.

I'm tired of giving
My heart to one who doesn't care.
I'm tired of living
A life where happy times are rare.

I'm tired of walking
Away from problems far and near.
I'm tired of talking
To people who will never hear.

I'm tired of seeing
The hurt and pain Man can't avoid.
I'm tired of being
A person whom this world's destroyed.

I'm tired of choosing
To show the feelings I should hide.
I'm tired of losing
The battles I have waged inside.

I'm tired...

Judy Belfield

BECOMING OLD

The ripest, richest moments
last as long as
we are able to breathe
their delicately fleeting scents;
wisps of time
aged to superlative edge
razor sharp against our necks,
the potential for life
as intense
as for annihilation.
I have withstood such moments;
knowing the danger,
invited return
and waited again
and again.
When the summer reeks
of its prematurely dropped fruits
(forgotten pears split open
and rotting in the heat)
I wince from the sharp pain
of a terrible memory
I cannot reconstruct
and would not dare.

Dawn Simmons

AN END

Innocence was left untouched
as a goodbye triggered
the death
of a dream just begun.
I reached to touch your lips
for the last time
and watched
as my reflection
trickled down your cheek.

Shonda Talerico

THE PAST

Concerts
with Jack Daniels tucked away

1976 Caprice Classic
with stains on the back seats

Narrow couches
made for two

Cherished love notes
on tattered looseleaf

Public displays of affection
flirting in detentions

Musical Christmas cards
alley kats and nikki

Pink Floyd
the wall

Majestic Pegasus
satin sheets

Homecoming dances
crumpled corsages

Soft back rubs
soiled handkerchiefs

"What happened to it all?"
I ask myself

As I wake up next to
last night's guy

Judy Belfield

DOG DAY

Day stretches out like
big old dog
in August
toothless, lop-eared, dusty,
heavy with fur.
Dog's lower jaw
hangs slack
saliva drooling.
Eyes have a dumb look
wet, palooka-like,
appearing, disappearing
under dull brown lids.
After awhile
secret entertainment begins.
A far-off dream plays;
dog twitches, switches its tail,
yips, yaps, squeals
then settles
into a deathlike state
wrapped up in
thick smell.
Stays that way for hours.

Rich Goberville

THE RABBITS ON MY SHELF

When I got home from work one day I went straight to my room. I threw my jacket on my bed and lay down next to it. I wondered how customers could be so rude. Like it was my fault the store was out of everything that was on sale. My weary eyes ventured to my shelf above my bed, and I noticed a little white porcelain rabbit sitting there between my clock radio and my comb. It had never been up there before, so I wondered where it could have come from. It reminded me of the real rabbit I had when I was younger. I had this little leash for it, and sometimes I would take it out of its cage and walk it in my backyard. Though I wouldn't really call it "walking," my rabbit , because it just sat there and nibbled on the grass and enjoyed the fresh summer breeze. If it were lucky, it would find a clover patch and feast on all the little flowers. Then when it finally finished eating, it would come near my face and tickle me with its whiskers. Sometimes I thought that was actually the best part of my summer days--when I would just lay next to my rabbit and forget about everything else.

But where did this rabbit on my shelf come from? I went downstairs to ask my mom and she told me that my dad got it for me. I went down to the basement where he was lifting weights and said a quick "Thank you." I really didn't know how to say thanks, though, because I didn't even know why he gave me the rabbit. It was no holiday or anything special that day. I expected a little explanation for why he gave it to me, but he just said a quick, "You're welcome."

So I was left wondering why he gave me the rabbit. Maybe it was that he noticed I had been depressed lately, and it was his way of saying, "You'll make it." Or maybe it was his way of saying, "I love you." But no matter what he meant by it, it made me feel warm. For that day, I felt as if my dad and I could understand each other perfectly, which was odd because usually I feel as though we live in different worlds.

Since that day, my dad has given me a few more rabbits. One is a carved wooden one that is stained a dark brown. Another one is a giant ceramic one that is all white. They just appear in my room for no apparent reason. Every time I look at the rabbits on my shelf, they kind of make me happy because I remember that my father cares for me. But they can also make me sad, because they also symbolize the lack of real communication between us. Our typical conversation for the day runs like this: My dad asks, "Are you going to the health club?" and I say, "No, I don't have time." Period. That's the whole conversation. Sometimes I wish we would talk more, but I really don't think he understands me as well as I would like him to. I'm the son he tries so hard to understand, but never quite can. Maybe because he was so much different when he was my age. I'm sure he wonders why I sit on my bed and try to write poetry, instead of going to the health club to lift weights and get massive muslces. And I'm sure he wonders why I never tried out for football or baseball in my life. Sure, I would play a game of football with the neighborhood kids, but I think he would have liked me to join a real team.

Sometimes I wish I could explain all of this--try to let him inside of my thoughts for just awhile, but I never seem to get the words out. One day I was thinking about how little my dad and I really talk. So I decided that I would tell him how much I appreciated him. I thought of this when I was at the mall with a friend and saw a boy and his father talking like they were best friends. Then I walked past a card shop and saw a little Indian statue in a display case. That was one thing I knew about my dad. I knew he liked Indians. He has

(continued)

Nels Nelson

UNEDUCABLE

I walk the floors,
These hardwood floors,
Splinters setting in the soles of my feet.
Each prick I feel,
Each gorgeous drop of blood I shed,
Represents a lesson well taught.
But I am such a poor student,
I cannot learn,
So over the same rough spots I tread.
I, the stupid man,
Soon will become rotting, grey meat.
Only then will I know of life,
Only then will I respect the floor,
After I've picked up all the splinters,
And have bled the final drop,
When I wilt to the floor,
Empty, dead

Maria Mellinger

WHILE HE REMAINED LIMITED

While he remained limited
Space-wise,
He expanded
Mind-wise,
Eternally internal,
Until the exterior's enemy
Broke through.

Joseph M. Nahas

COWBOY BOB

Cowboy Bob, a jig and a job
Jumped on his horse and soon felt the throb
With a scream and a shout then a whoop-a-dee-dee
He flew off his horse and fell to his knees.
Bob tried to get up, but the pain was too much
But he understood he couldn't hold a glutch.
With a yip and a yipe and a strutter-strut
Bob pulled himself if somewhat up.
Cowboy Bob didn't see Black Barney that day
For his hands were on the wrong trigger and they would stay.
Cowboy Bob was blasted.

Rich Goberville

FRIENDS

Burrs in my hair
Lincoln Logs
Rocks in the pool
Franks's lunch to the neighborhood dog

Drinking swigs of vinegar (Yuck!)
Playing tackle football
Egging Fat Ed's
Three man softball

Swimming at Doc's
Cushion fights in your basement
Tearing down your elaborate fort
(You didn't kill me, to my amazement)

Playing ping-pong behind our backs
Hide and Seek in the dark
Days spent at Minneoka
Fires started with just a spark

Your garden in the woods
(Which, to your doubts, I did not destroy)
Catching turtles in the pond
And snakes, which was your true joy

You getting into fights with Greg
As I watched his tears
Acorn fights at the bus stop
You getting me a job at Sears

And then Time passed
As it always seems to do
But just one night of playing pool reminded me
I still have a friend in you

J. Ardith Cox

SILENCE

"Silence is a friend who will never betray."--Confucius
"Silence is an enemy once betrayed."--J. Ardith Cox

The Rabbits on My Shelf, continued

loads of Indian books and even some Indian pictures on his bedroom wall. I went into the card shop and bought the little Indian.

When I got home, I set it on top of the television set in his bedroom. He came home alter that night, and when he saw the statue, my mom quickly mentioned that I had put it there. (I could hear, because my bedroom is right next to theirs.) He came to my room to say thank you, and I said, "You're welcome." Then there was a silence that grew more disturbing by the moment. Finally, my dad said, "Well, see you in the morning," and I just said, "Sure." I couldn't believe that I was so embarrassed that I couldn't even tell him why I gave him the Indian, like I planned to do. The words just stuck to the roof of my mouth like a spoonful of peanut butter. When my dad finally left my room, after what seemed forever, I had just one thought on my mind. Why is intimacy so hard for us?

Norma Dodge

THE LIFE AND LOVES OF A YUPPIE

Oh, for the life of a yuppie
Porsche, Jacuzzi, Shih Tzu puppy,
To trade one's Olds for a Mercedes
To dress in furs one's favorite ladies.

A yuppie's wife is called a yummie.
No more than two shall call her "mummy."
Golf and tennis, shops at Bloomie's
Keeps in touch with college "roomies."

Only the best address will do them.
Ten rooms is only a cottage to them.
Tennis court and swimming pool,
Nanny, nursery, private school.

Oh, for the life of a yuppie.
Porsche, Jacuzzi, Shih Tzu puppy,
Material objects must be won,
The race goes on and on and on.

Dawn Simmons

BEACHES

I can remember
sitting by the downstairs fireplace
during those frosty nights,
talking (sometimes til three),
eating popcorn and watching the fire
(it sometimes made us cry).
And I can remember
scraping the ice off the windows of my car,
the moonlight turning the snow
into fields of glitter,
and you scribbling "bye" with your finger
on the fogged-up glass of your front door.
And I can remember
driving home and feeling so grateful
that I had such a wonderful person
for a best friend.
We've gone through so much change,
and it's almost winter again.
Will there be any frosty night this year?

Sherry Gunderman

ROTORELIEF

Others
see you in the hall.
And ignore you.
Your fast-paced figure
Your downcast eyes.
You might as well
be invisible
in their world.
In mine,
you are the sun
that is hidden
behind the many clouds
shrouding my day, hopes
and dreams.
You are not reality.
Reality yells.
You whisper.
Reality blatantly battles
your subtlety.
Good luck in Boston.
I hear New England
is beautiful
in the fall.

Joseph M. Nahas

INTRO...

Sometimes you just have to pay, in order to win. When you have to invest in your problem, you want the best; someone who will get the job done, clean and effectively. There is one group that you can trust to fulfill your extermination deeds. That group is Maximum Bodycount Incorporated. M.B.I.

Rich Goberville

QUESTIONS

As I finally get in a comfortable position
to read a book,
you frighten me out of my serenity
as you jump on my lap.
I want to push you back off,
but not wanting you to feel unloved
I allow you to stay
and relax as comfortably as I used to be.
You nuzzle your head against me,
as if you need me,
and then you quickly doze off.
I watch you
in your peaceful sleep
and start to wonder
all these crazy thoughts.
I wonder if you ever feel sad,
or if you ever get bored
the way I sometimes do.
But most of all
I wonder if you feel love.
Can you feel love?
Just as my entire existence
is lost in thoughts,
you jump off my lap.
A fly buzzing by disturbed your nap
and you decide to chase it.
What silly thoughts I have.
You just proved that you are
just a "cat."
I watch you chase the fly
until your get bored.
Soon afterwards,
you jump back up on my lap
nuzzling your head against me,
as if you need me.

Maria Mellinger

JUST AS AN ENEMY

Just as an enemy
Gives thought of a friend,
The winter brings dreams
Of the summer,
The work makes the waste
Worthwhile;
My turmoil is necessary
To appreciate the peace.

Dawn Simmons

WHAT IF...?

Things really clicked
in the beginning
But you feared
a painful ending
So we had no middle
And I was left
with nothing.

Rich Goberville

WHAT TO SAY

I won't say that I can't live without you
Because I've been caught in that trap
When someone said they needed me
And I didn't care for them
But I pretended that I needed them too
Just to make them feel good
But soon the truth came out
And then we both felt like fools
No, I won't say that I can't live without you
I won't even say I care
I'll just say I love you
And just leave it at that
Because saying I love you says it all
It's not saying "Please don't leave me"
It's just saying "I want you to stay,"
But only if you love me too"

J. Ardith Cox

THEY TELL ME

They tell me
How Time
Distance,
And Loneliness
Will tear us apart.
You tell me
That Love
Can make this Dream
Survive.

They tell me
How Love,
Life,
And Happiness
Will fade from our hearts.
You tell me
That Dreams
Can keep this Flame
Alive.

They tell me
How Pride,
Want,
And Selfishness
Will not let Love last.
You tell me
That Fate
And join two hearts
As one.

They tell me
How People
Places,
And Things
Will bring back the past.
You tell me
That Nothing
Can stop a Love
Begun.

Some things they say
Seem to tell me
They don't care.
Everything you say
Seems to tell me
You love me.

Kim Vollmer

KNOW OF ME

Comforted by crickets outside my window.
They remind me that I am safe from
the person I used to be.
I will not dodge your questions.
I am protected by time.
I do not ask you what you need
Only to dangle it before your eyes.
They say you have to hide your love away.
I can't
You will know of me
from the most reliable source,
Yourself.

Clariece Henne

FEARS

Last week saw the passing of Halloween for another year. It seems there is always a lot of speculation about what it is that makes us fearful. The "Ten O'Clock News" nightly serves us a banquet of fears to choose from, if by chance we are having any difficulty finding them on our own. Take your pick: nuclear war, total damage of the environment, a mounting deficit. These fears seem somewhat remote, albeit real. Standing just a few mile markers from my half-century past, taking a good look around me--and also looking back--I'd have to say I've pretty well conquered any fears I've had. Although "conquered" may be a somewhat strong word. It conjures up a picture of someone who has done battle with great fears and has overcome them. My fears are ordinary fears shared by practically everyone I've every met: fear of the dark, fear of losing a loved one, fear of failure. Oh, I'm not trying to make my reader believe that these fears still don't raise their ugly heads occasionally. I'm just here to say that with practice I've learned to slap them down when they do. Consequently, I had the feeling that if I spent time writing about these fears, I would give them more credence than they deserve. So I choose instead to acquaint my reader with three things that make me feel secure.

We live in a big old farmhouse. In the fall when the weather turns cold, an army of mice line up with duffle bags in tow waiting for their chance to bivouac in my house. This place has become so popular, the invasion so complete, that a call to the big guns to see about extermination seemed timely. Well, now I know how

(continued)

the big guns attained their status--by charging king-size fees. We simply could not afford their services. I did not actively seek out the services of a cat, although the thought had entered my mind. I thought the problem was too big for one cat. An army of mice certainly could not be eradicated by one general.

One night, in a dreadful rainstorm, I heard a pitiful sound coming from my back-porch step. When I went to investigate, I found a tiny wet creature sorely in need of a good meal. A kitten. I brought her in, dried her off and fed her. My thoughts at the time did not go beyond giving her shelter and a meal to this stranger. But one day led to another and soon weeks had gone by. The Kitten became known as T.K. and it became crystal clear that our family had just increased by one.

What does all this have to do with feeling secure? Well that tiny homeless creature grew daily in stature, catching mouse after mouse until it was obvious she was the general I'd been looking for. The army was on the run, and soon had retreated entirely. So, I'm quite secure in the knowledge that my home will not be invaded and held under siege again. It's also a comfortable feeling to curl up on the sofa with a good book and T.K. purring on my lap--something I would not have cared to do with the Orkin man.

Speaking of curling up with a good book brings to mind another thing that makes me feel secure. My bookshelves filled with books. (I just can't abide bookshelves with plants and sculptures and photographs. Bookshelves are for books.)

Once upon a time, several years ago, I can't bear to count them, we had a snowstorm that dumped tons of snow on us. As I've mentioned before, I live in a big, old farmhouse. What I didn't say is that it's up a long lane, a lane that becomes impassable with only a couple of inches of snow. The amount of snow this particular storm dumped on us made the lane impossibly impassible. My family members were scattered hither and yon. Not one of them could make it home, and of course, there was no way for me to make it out. I listened to the weatherman report gleefully that the snow would continue, to be joined by high winds. This went on for days. I was secure in the knowledge that whatever he could dish out, I could take, because I had those shelves full of books. In fact, the storm became a welcome intruder into my daily life. Now I would have the chance to curl up on the sofa for endless hours to read without feeling guilty about not cooking supper or washing dirty socks. But all good things come to an end, and after four days, the snowplow came lumbering up the road. Soon to be followed by the school bus.

School busses--there is my third example of things that make me feel secure. Each morning as I sit by the window drinking my morning tea, planning my day, I watch the school bus go by. Some mornings it stops, the door opens, and gobbles up the little red-jacketed boy I sent down the lane. Some mornings it's a little bit bigger green-jacketed boy this huge yellow creature gobbles up. In nice weather when the windows are open, I can hear the reassuring hum of the engine that powers it on its way. I feel good every time I see the bus chugging down the road. I can't explain why, even though I have given it a lot of thought. The closest I can come to an explanation is this: No matter what I may have heard on the "Ten O'Clock News" to scare me to death, it's morning now and the methodical yellow beast is working its way up and down all the country roads, collecting our most treasured possessions. I know life will go on for at least another day. And the morning I don't see it, unless of course it's a holiday or the snow is up to my eyebrows again--that's the morning I'll begin to feel a real fear.

Nels Nelson

HEY, GOD

A caffeine tick-
Why is it always so late
When I look at the clock?
Why does smoke taste better
And the music sound tenfold more soulful?
That damn clock.
Shut up! I'm not ready for sleep.
Is it here where I will find my god?
Here, between a bedtime I don't believe in,
And my first class, which I'll skip?
Why is night so much more than day?
Is it darkness and solitude?
The lights are on, my house is full.
Could it be the moon?
Romantic fool, the moon has been written into death.
Then why the night? Tell me soon,
The price of a night is rising,
And I still have no answers.
Who is this nowhere man?

Judy Belfield

SHOWDOWN

Your eyes fixed in
a too-long stare
the green blurring before me
narrowing as pupils expand
locking up the me I was
a moment before
tossing out all trace of humor
for this deadly confrontation:
a secret dare you issue
without a word
(humiliating my sense of what's what,
challenging me to run, to speak,
but I will not).
We wait
smoldering, stubborn;
perhaps time will suddenly
open up and scream
til our eardrums split.
This never happens.
Instead, one of us always
looks away.

Mike Carter

EVILDOER
CHAPTER 1: THE WOMAN

She paced inside the building of the gas station. She had her money in hand and as she walked back and forth, expressing her anger at the attendant she waved it around. Several times as she turned, she almost knocked one of the candy racks over.

Elmer was about to jump over the counter when he saw this. His station was his most prized possession in the world. He didn't want any woman messing things up. He could have seen this woman coming. When she put her gas in her car herself, she had been complaining to the air. Now she was complaining to him about the state that a country would have to be in to make a woman of her caliber pump her own gas and almost break a nail. He made every attempt to calm her. Under his breath, he even offered to kiss her feet if she would just leave him alone.

The woman's tirade about the dispensing of gasoline escalated. To her, though, this was no speech about gas. It was her personal crusade for everyone to treat her like a queen. She treated every subject the same way. Every time she had to open a door for herself or pull a chair out to sit down, she would start up a long argument with the nearest man about common courtesy. With her being an extremely unattractive woman, this happened a lot.

The woman's anger began to transfer to Elmer. Enough is enough, he thought. What is so important about the pumping of gas? He broke off the woman in mid-sentence. "Please, Miss. Would you just pay and leave already?" He took a step back and waited for a reaction.

To this, the woman practically exploded in anger. What right did this little peasant of a man have to insult her in this way? Fed up with the man, she threw the money at him and stormed to the door. As she left, she knocked the candy rack over that she had previously bumped.

Elmer stood thinking for a moment. Before he had had some doubts, but that final antic of knocking over the candy rack proved it. He had to go to higher authority on this one. He gathered up the money and walked to the back room. He sat at the altar. With a wooden match cut from a 666-year-old tree on Friday the 13th, he lit the thirteen candles that formed a semi-cirlce in front of him. He hummed a tune in a deep voice and said a few words of Latin needed to summon the Lord of the Flies. Soon, he would come.

Nels Nelson

FOR AN OLD SOUL

Again I find myself
Wanting to give to yourself.
But what?
Ink and paper?
No, I have more, just let me look for it.
Things are so unkempt, you see.
To give, but how?
Oh, I'm just a boy.
But what a boy!
No, a just-boy.
Just a boy who has learned
to fall quietly,
To be a fool
Quietly.

Sherry Gunderman

FATE

I can cry
a thousand tears
for the one
who'll never hear

But for you
I'll simply sing
this silent song

Far away
and long ago
I left him standing
in the snow

But you are different
because it's summer
in our world

And if my mention
of the past
caused your eyes
to downwards cast

I'm sorry
I never meant
to hurt your pride

He is gone
and you are here
the message
is so clear

But I know the truth
and fate
will have its way

When you go
I will not cry
Don't look back
I'll dry my eyes

Have fun
going abroad
But think of me

Because your face
will haunt me too
and knowing you're
with someone new

Will hurt
As I'm destined
To walk alone.

Sherry Gunderman

SURREALISM

Why
are you alone?
You walk to
class & swing
your bag
and take large
steps
to make your height
seem more
and to accommodate
your stride.
You move so quickly
that others
may not try
to see though your
transparent spirit.
Don't slow down--
movement and action
baffle the eye.
And you
can remain
anonymous...
forever.

Maria Mellinger

YOU CAN GET ANOTHER

You can get "another"
Of almost anything
In this world.
It's the attachment
To the "one"
That makes it special.

Paul Pritchett

ZEN FRENCH FRY

I think it's
really interesting
how you don't
have to mention
the title of
a poem, in
the poem itself.

Maria Mellinger

A SWEET SILENCE

A sweet silence
On the phone;
And in the background,
The laughter of others
In the room...
Your breathing,
An occasional heavy sigh;
My favorite conversation...

Shonda Talerico

GOD, I'M STARVING

Rover gulps down Gravy Train
As a family chokes down their meal of grain
At the feast delicious desserts are passed
As dry bread crumbs are divided to make them last

"GOD, I'M STARVING!" belched the fat man.
"God, I'm starving," implored the dirty waif.

Half-chewed sandwiches tossed by the street
As hungry children wish for a hunk of meat
Slippery popcorn tossed around the show
Barren fields where nothing will grow

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Day-old donuts are trashed
Bums retrieve dinner before it's smashed
Baseball hot dogs bought for $5
Mama's thin milk won't keep baby alive

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Catching butter sauce dribbling down his chin
Charity clatters in the rusty tin
Stuffing Twinkies into shopping bags
Finding lunch among soiled rags

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Caramel crushed in a sidewalk groove
Mama's baby won't move
Catsup covers a crispy fry
A hopeless tear hovers in her eye

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Sherry Gunderman

THE CAFETERIA

The deepness of the moment
suffocated her.
She bit her lip
and pretended to ignore
his stupidity.

She left,
without a backwards glance,
and cursed him
into eternal damnation
for all of his cruel ignorance.

Her stride picked momentum.
She hated the anonymous blond
She hated her friend
She hated him
And she hated herself--for caring.

"Why is this HAPPENING??"
She demanded of the air.
No reply came.
The Future stood at the door waiting patiently for her
And she walked past him.

Maria Mellinger

IN A MOST DIRTY

In a most dirty,
Childish, and
Vindictive way,
I have snatched
My friendship back
From you,
And hidden it
In the alleyway.
Maybe there
It will find
Fish bones
Or pleasant felines
To associate with,
Which can be
No worse
Than you.

Sherry Gunderman

A MEETING WITH THE STRANGER

I met him.
The brown-eyed boy...
with the beautiful hair
that had one miniature braid
skipping down the right side of his bangs.

He complimented me
that brown-eyed boy...
he liked my sweater.
"Sharp" was the quote.
And I replied "thank you" in an innocent whisper.

He knows.
That brown-eyed boy knows
that my heart beats faster when he's in the room.

And he stared at me.
The brown-eyed boy sure stared--
and saw my soul through his brown eyes.
I only wish
he was worth getting to know.

Kim Vollmer

NO STRINGS

no strings
no attachment--no detachment
no giving--no taking
no staying--no leaving
no charge--no refund
no problem
we don't have any strings
in our relationship
we have this invisible force
we are surrounded by something
that keeps us
when we are together
and holds us when we are
apart
no strings
this is what we've become
I don't feel bad when you're away
but I don't feel good anymore

Sherry Gunderman

ADOLESCENCE

dusty country roads
full harvest moons
king-of-the-mountain
mosquito bites
ice-skating
sunburn
black and white movies
snowball fights
mayonnaise jars full of lightning bugs
horse shows
4-H
picnics
chlorine
kittens
snow angels
corn on the cob
convertibles
county fairs
sleepovers
scary stories
inseparable friends
Perfection
Childhood.

Nels Nelson

WHOOOHOOHOOOO

The music starts, oozing out of the speakers,
Kisses me open mouth on the forehead,
Sloppy, wet, luscious,
Calling me across the world
To far India,
Farther, into space.
Seductive, it wears a dress slit to the hip,
"Do you want to dance?"
Oh, I need to dance.
"Then come with me, into me."
She, my music, leads me, tickles,
Smiling.
God, I could piss my pants!
"Don't postpone joy," she shrieks.
My word!
The final beats of a drum
Lead me into spectral orgasm.

Sherry Gunderman

THE STRANGER

Things
are strange.
The long-awaited dream
is now reality.
Now...that happiness
is around the corner
(I can hear its footsteps & happy whistling)
my eyes have a tendency
to wander.
My green eyes
stray to his brown ones
And I admire
his hair--his stance--his style.
He captures me
and smiles with interest.
I feel overwhelming lashes
of shame and guilt
for studying a stranger's features
when my future
is waiting at the door.

Peace

FRONT DESK

One more shot
that's all I got
'til I go back to hell
If you need to get in
a tad more gin
just ring the little bell
An eight hour shift
then I will drift
into an astral week
Hump day comes
to jazz the ones
diligent to meet
weekend flies
through lazy skies
my head fills with games
Night tolls on
the clock says "BONG"
and billows out the names
Names I will remember

Maria Mellinger

THE BEST LAID PLANS

The best laid plans
Of the hunger artist
Are plowed, devoured, destroyed
By the tip of the doctor's
Opera hat
As he exits the hospital room.

Jacque Klika

REPLAY

Angry, hurtful
words exchanged
have left their wounds
which memories refuse to forget.
Years of pain
surface again
and again they slice through fragile egos.
He said, she said...
who remembers well?
Yet over and over they play in future
incidents. Our hope
is built on sand
when we can not
forgive, forget.
Instead...we replay
again, and again.
And who's to blame?

Maria Mellinger

WE'VE RUBBER CEMENTED

We've rubber cemented
Our lives together,
Like two kindergarten
Construction paper hearts.
And the only trouble is that
Gloppy stuff that peels off
At the edges.

Nels Nelson

DANCING IN BLUE, PLAYING TO YELLOW

I see now
Where Matisse found the yellow
In jazz.
The blue I could understand,
And the black figure, of course,
Dancing,
But the yellow, it can't
Just represent stars in
Jazz air.
It could have been
The lick of light off of a horn,
Or the musicians, dancing in blue,
Do you see where I'm heading with this?
It is all logical.
What I'm trying to say
Is that being a black figure
Dancing in jazz blue,
Is a soulless exercise
Without a little you,
Yellow.

Sherry Gunderman

MY HEART CAN'T TELL YOU NO

The memories
of last year
have been chipping
and blowing away
on the winds of the present
To the tempo
of a solitary
guitar
And the pattern
of incessant
teardrops.

Judy Belfield

SPORT

Hell is a baseball game
in the city
in July at night
when there isn't a breeze
and it's so hot
the stars sweat
and all the vendors' shirts
are soaked through.
The smell of hot dogs and beer
and steamed cement
are trapped in the smoke
from a thousand cigarettes
and hangs in a cloud
under the lights.
Sixth inning,
kids squirm, some people are
incredibly drunk;
bats tick, clank, tick again;
a whistle
shoots out from
the crowd's hum;
a yell, another whistle,
hum
and then, a hit
cheers, everybody stands
the smoke cloud shifts slightly
the heat closes in
strangles.
This is hell.
We love it.

Sherry Gunderman

THE DATE

Brian wasn't really a Brian. Now, of course, he was, because that was his name--given at birth, the name was christened by, and the name that he had signed on his homework assignments since kindergarten.

I studied the exquisite creature next to me as he shifted the navy Escort from first to second and imagined him with a soap-opera name. In MY mind, Brian was a Miles or Drew or Sebastian or Ashley...something exotic or hopelessly romantic that would send shivers of excitement up the spines of Folger's French Roast commercial producers and seduce Harlequin editors into publication.

Brian caught me staring and interrupted my daydreams with a logical question. "Turn here?"

"Yah," I answered.

Brian had long hair...and when I say long I mean longer than shoulder length. He had a habit of pushing it behind his ears (where it never stayed) and then rubbing his nose where his glasses rested.

Whatever glamour his name lacked, his impeccable style made up for. Brian was intellectual, worldly, and one-hundred percent artistic. He saw sculptures in old bedsprings that I would have given to Joe the garbage man without a second thought. I wondered why I never felt intimidated by his overwhelming knowledge of everything under the sun. Friends assured me that it was all quite logical: Opposites attract. I decided that he was no smarter than me...we simply never agreed on taste and style--therefore, we never ran out of things to debate about.

This was our second date--our second excursion to Chicago, and our second day spent at art exhibits. he had done all the planning for this day. We were going to see the Andy Warhol exhibit that was on display at the Art Institute. He handed me a pre-paid ticket as we walked from the cavernous parking garage and into the blinding light of a June afternoon.

We dodged traffic with urban expertise and walked up the shallow marble steps as the art connoisseurs we presumed ourselves to be. The exhibit was impressive. Brian and I stood next to each other and critiques Campbell's soup cans and criticized a purple Marilyn and cringed over grisly views of death in a kaleidoscope of colors.

We walked through a room done completely in nauseatingly neon yellow with purple cow portraits smiling boldly out at us from their paper captivity. I snickered quietly as he shaded his eyes from the gaudiness of the room. Brian was a true comedian. Of course, I had to pry like a grave-robber to come to that conclusion.

He was my biggest conquest. I drooled over his mystique for a semester in an art history class. I followed him and learned his schedule and giggled like a psychotic seventh-grader. I identified his truck and backpack and stealthy footsteps. I studied his profile and adored his dimples and knew what brand of gym shoes he wore. I fed my obsession by reading books that I saw him reading and tried to psychoanalyze his scribblings that were bound in a maroon notebook.

Who he was and what he was about was the core of my being for a span of four months. Then (God forbid) I began to TALK to him. I interrupted his studies and

(continued)

made small talk that he elaborated on. The last day of class found us walking out together after our final...which was tremendously ironic because this WAS so final...and I bravely asked him for his telephone number. He gave it to me eagerly, handing me a pen and paper, and smiled "goodbye" as I blushed uncontrollably.

Four days later I used that number, and he asked me to an art exhibit on Navy Pier. it was beautiful. It was impressive. And the clip from that day will haunt me forever was simply sitting on a bench that overlooked the lake and talking about life. The city of Chicago was on our right, and seagulls dove at the water in front of us. Church chimes tattled the hour and continued to play quiet hymns through the misty pink sky.

We saw each other in the hall at summer school and spent hours laughing together over the phone. I knew that he had already graduated from our junior college with an Associates Degree, but wasn't prepared when the day came...

Brian stopped me in the hall. He was so cute the way he looked nervous and shifted his stance and played with his glasses when he talked to me. He told me that he had won the scholarship that he had applied for.

"A twelve-thousand dollar scholarship?" I gaped.

He smiled with pride. "Yep! I'm going to an orientation in July and leaving in August for good."

Leaving. Going going gone. This college that he had won such a prestigious and impressive scholarship to was on the East Coast. This college was far faaaar away from Marquette and his home and the incredible Chicago art galleries that we had spent hours in...and me. I didn't think that we had some passionate love affair blossoming or anything as flamboyant as all that, but I enjoyed cutting down Cezanne and Picasso with him. I felt liberated from slapstick when he shone his dry humor my way, and I liked him.

It was some obscure time between that day in the orange hallway at school and when we stood admiring Warhol that both of our attitudes must have changed drastically. We didn't talk as much. Maybe if we knew less about each other, it would hurt less when he left. Our humor turned into serious discussion about school and the future and how he WANTED to go away, but he also wanted to stay. He told me more than twice that he would like to go to our junior college for one more year to take art courses...not stuffy business courses. I wanted him to stay another year too, but never told him. From my lips he heard about how exciting this new school would be, and how lucky he was that he was going exactly where he had wanted to go, and that he was going to go far in life. Far. Far away.

We left the Warhol exhibit and wandered through every other room that the Art Institute had to show. We sat on benches next to each other and laughed at how we disagreed on EVERY piece of artwork we talked about. Somehow, the whole time we laughed and talked, I knew that this was the end. things were too different between us to ever work out. He was too mature for his age, and I was too immature for mine. Yet his pensiveness fascinated me--and I studied him with the serenity of a child watching a pinwheel spin. My adolescent humor intrigued him and he listened to my thoughts with genuine interest. but the fascination and intrigue whispered empty promises to each of us. His East Coast scholarship waited, as did my rowdy friends at the junior college where Brian and I had met.

I told myself that we really had nothing in common. Infatuation with a stranger had been so much more fun. I never saw or spoke to the mysterious Brian after that sunny day we spent in the art museum. Fall semester started soon after that, and I went back to my reality as he jetted off to his. I sat in rhetoric classes and read school papers that were filled with poetry and prose. Among the names listed on the credit page was Brian's. I tore to his poems and found them full of melancholy messages of leaving home and everything familiar behind. I never knew that he wrote poetry. Sure, he painted abstract paintings full of earth tones and listened to The Cure and "The Graduate" was his favorite movie and blue was his favorite color. He hated Lima beans (doesn't everyone?) and he worked for his father, and he was Protestant, and a Pisces, and he watched soap operas...but did I ever really know him?

I laugh at myself now for thinking that I knew so much about Brian when my knowledge was so shallow. I wonder what he had been thinking when he held my hand beneath Gustave Caillebotte's "Place de l'Europe on a Rainy Day," a cityscape done at the turn of the century--a twenty-foot tall oil painting that gave moody depth to a rainy day in the city--where strangers walked past each other on the street, and everyone hid beneath umbrellas--to escape the bleak drizzle...and to protect their own anonymity.

Norma Dodge

A LOVE STORY

My husband, when you look at me so dully, with eyes that were once so brightly blue, my heart breaks anew over the tragedy that has befallen us.

You were so happy, so active, so full of life, and so full of pleasure in that life, and now you are so helpless, and what is worse, unable to communicate to me in any way. Sometimes I feel that there is a spark of recognition in your eyes, or an answering pressure when I hold your hands in mine, but the doctors tell me I must not hope--they cannot tell me not to pray.

Our children have shown such strength and support. Debbi stays with us and helps me with your care, and Allison comes over as often as she can. Our son, who is stationed so far away, has been home to visit you. Though you do not know that he was here, I was strengthened by his love and deep concern for us.

Our two teen-aged grandsons came to see you, though they feel uncertain and uncomfortable. they find it hard to realize how ill you are until they see you. Though they are so "grown up," they wipe away tears as they leave your bedside.

Allison's five-year-old son, your "little Lukey," asks when Grandpa will be well, "so he will know me again."

Steven and Leslie, who, at the age of three, do not understand illness, peek in and ask when Grandpa is going to wake up. Baby Meghan gives you a butterfly kiss, and gently pats your cheek. She will be taught to say, "I love you, Grandpa," even though you will never hear or understand her.

Oh, my dear, when I lie sleepless at night, crying for the husband I once knew, I know that the tears that fall so freely are not tears of self-pity, but tears of grief for the strong, handsome, laughing man who is hidden forever behind that uncomprehending gaze with which your eyes meet mine.

I pray anew for the strength to see me through to what can only be a tragic ending to the many years of love we shared.

Rich Goberville

WHY I WRITE ABOUT LOVE

I was told by some to write about something other than love. That just reminded me of something. I remember when I was little (maybe twelve) and my dream was to become a song writer. When I listened to songs on the radio, they all seemed to be about love, and I didn't understand why. I told myself I would revolutionize all of that. If I ever had out an album of my own, there would be no love songs on it. I would have every other imaginable subject, but no love songs.

But that was before I actually fell in love. Sure, I loved my parents and other relatives, but I mean the kind of love where you want to spend your whole life together. Since than, it seems to control every ounce of my soul, every beat of my existence. I guess that's what the teenage years are all about, trying to find out what love really is (and maybe writing some stupid sounding poems because you're not really sure yet).

But to me, writing is a type of therapy. Not to say that I'm just writing a journal. I try to write my poems so that others can relate to them and, hopefully, enjoy them. But mostly, it's a learning process for me. Until I find out what love really means, I don't think I will be able to stop writing about it. Sometimes I really try to write something light-hearted, but it always seems to end up on a serious note. I can try to write more "non-love" poems or stories, but I don't think I can totally stop writing love poems, because they are the ones with the most meaning to me.

Rich Goberville

SECURITY

I observe the world
through my bedroom window
enclosed in a separate world
one that I say I like to be in
I can see rainbows from here
without having to be in the rain
I can see love from here
without actually tasting the pain
and in the bitter cold of winter
I sit warmed by my heater
and in the withering heat of summer
I sit cooled by my fan
yes, I have everything
enclosed in my private space
everything I need
will someone get me out of here?

Sherry Gunderman

THREE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The wind
courted the leather-brown leaves,
and asked them to dance.
And the leaves accepted.
I watched the giggling leaves from my first-floor window
as they skipped away down the wet
night street--
they were entranced by the wind,
and ignored my presence.

I put my hand to the glass
as if to stop them
from leaving
and left fingerprints on the window.
Nostalgia settled
and my heart wept in agony.
Halloween.
Happy Happy Halloween.
My favorite holiday.
Three years since our eyes first met.
One year since I last heard your voice.

Three years since I became
unexplainably happy.
Three years since
the curtain of impending pain
was lowered over my happiness
like a gauzy shear.

Three years of the happiest.
Three years of the saddest--
because you left me
on a sunny day
to begin a new life.
And your empty air
could not be filled by another.
Happy Halloween.

Three anniversary.
I watched the dead leaves
somersault in the air
and called out to them--
not to go...

Because no other leaves
would ever be as beautiful.

Melynda Findlay

A NEW CAR

It was the summer of 1987 and suddenly there were four drivers in my family--well, sort of. Of course my mom, my dad, and I drove. My brother was trying to. After twelve tries, he finally had his license--but needless to say, my parents were hesitant about letting him take the car. So, with three regular drivers and only two cars, transportation was always a problem. We had this horrible electric blue station wagon and a Nova. I drove the Nova most of the time, which I didn't mind. It wasn't too bad. The station wagon was another story, however. Its only redeeming quality was that it didn't have wood on the sides. It has this putrid color of electric blue (METALLIC electric blue) and it had no radio. Even an AM radio that only picked up country-western stations would have been noise at least. Then came the fateful day that my parents decided it was time to buy a new car. I was excited at first; I though my family would finally get a nice four-door luxury car like every other family in America. But NO! Our family has never had a normal car. Besides the "electric blue" (as we fondly refer to the wagon) and the Nova, we've had two Vegas, a big rusty white station wagon, and a Maverick. Well, God forbid my parents should break their dorky trend buying embarrassing cars.

"We're buying a Ford Aerostar!" my dad announced proudly. (Oh, as if that's something to brag about.) An oversized loaf of bread that looks like some sort of demented insect.

"It'd be a lot cheaper to get a Buick Regal, Dad," I replied attempting to appeal to his sense of frugality.

"Not really. Just think, we could bring Duffy with us when we go to Sharon and George's this summer," my mom gushed.

Oh, super. "Just take me to hell now, Lord," I mumbled. Sharon and George's? A mini-van? Take the dog on vacation? Yes, hell would be a holiday compared to this vacation. Sharon and George are my parents' friends. They live in a resort town in northern Wisconsin. I HATE them for two reasons: 1) they are always trying to fix me up with their dweebo son, David, and; 2) they won't let me take showers. they expect me to bathe in their lake, with the fish! I just don't think so! And bring our dog Duffy along? Oh that would be a joy. Duffy weighs about 90 pounds, is a little *too* friendly, and has the *worst* dog breath *I've* ever experienced. Yes, I'd be spending this summer in Purgatory. Anyway, back to the New mini-van. Mom

(continued)

A New Car, continued

and Dad took Marc and I to the car lot in Naperville to see it. "Keep an open mind," I kept telling myself.

Well, it wasn't *that* bad. Actually it was that bad, but one important feature made the embarrassment seem worthwhile--AM/FM cassette with separate tuners and headphone jacks in the back seats!

"So what do you think?" dad asked.

"I'm likin' the radio," I replied.

I guess the car was almost cool with the radio, so my parents found another van that they liked "better." Figures. This one only had an AM radio--but it had one feature that no "dorky" car can be without--a car top carrier. My dad sacrificed a real radio for a car top carrier. Did the embarrassment never cease?

Well, in closing, I must admit I actually don't mind traveling in the "Wonder Bread Van!" I can't say whether I like driving it--the folks won't let me touch it. Well, I guess that's okay. It's touch to see with a grocery bag over your head.

David L. Sullivan, Jr.

SOWETO ROAD: A STORY OF THE AMERICAN NEAR-FUTURE

(After the Great Civil Conflict, circa 2017)

The blood mingles with the sand of the dusty road as the sand particles ride atop the puddles themselves like crude oil rising in stagnant colored water. The potholes begin to fill with the stuff as a stench more foul than that produced by skunks stabs at my nostrils, making me choke back bitter bile. Soon the wagons would come to collect the tortured and dead bodies of the day's 'catch.'

There is a small young Negro girl, seven, screaming her head off with eternal force, her small body convulsing on the old street corner, the face twisted in rage and grief. I gaze at her tear-stained face, caked with dust brought by the warm breeze of the early afternoon. Lord God in Heaven Above, I growl to myself in thought. How should any creature, especially as young and precious as this mere baby, this innocent human being, be subjected to such blindness and carnage as this? The thought perplexed me with increasing intensity as I continued to study the child, who had fallen unsteadily on her knees before her dead mother, her body riddled with bruises, in some places the flesh grotesquely torn to reveal tender pink flesh oozing brilliant crimson red blood down onto the street below. Swallowing my bile, I turn away and change direction.

Continuing my slow plod, I came upon a Negro youngster of good height and excellent build being brutally forced out of a rotting shack by six white and two black officers wearing full riot gear. Frowning in disgust, I clenched my teeth in silent rage as they pummeled the boy with bone-crushing blows. Deep pink and red bruises began to take appearance in various places along the boy's upper torso. Soon, the pain had become too unbearable, so the youngster viciously twisted and broke away from the mob, racing at astonishing speed toward the village's old mill.

Acting quickly, one of the white officers, a brutish, hulking mass of flesh with the obvious name of Crusher, snatched out his standard issue revolver and began blasting away at the boy as shouts of pain and horror reared from every face that was not police, whether white or black. In a few moments it was over as abruptly as it had started, for one of the projectiles scored a direct hit on the boy's skull, spewing blood, bone, and brain into the air as the body twitched nervously before collapsing to the ground. Another 'catch,' another paycheck. To them, it was one more step toward material satisfaction. Suddenly I felt a warm pressure along my right jaw followed by a gooey, oozing wetness. I looked to my right and then, quite astonishingly, down.

It was a small Negro boy, much like the one who had just gotten killed but much less refined, physically and psychologically. I could tell that the child's actual age was about thirteen or fourteen, but from the hard lines coursing around his eyes further complimented by caked dust gave him the look of forty. He was screaming curses at me in his native tongue, but the words were more like well-honed spears striking into my heart, driving me toward the pit of extinction. I was petrified during this time, unable to move a single muscle as the child started striking me in the side. A few moments later, I snapped back into alertness and, quite accidentally, pushed the child into the ground hard, whereas I had meant only to cast him aside; his head struck the crude pavement on the curb.

Carefully wiping the warm ooze off my cheek, I glanced at the boy numb with confusion as he leaped off the curb, lips swollen and bloody, and he began to his refutation again, this time around with a violent intensity that rivaled God's own wrath. I turned away and plodded on in shame, vaguely expecting him to follow. Instead, he did not, choosing to remain to stand his ground upon the dusty street itself while his words

(continued)

Soweto Road, continued

struck with greater tenacity, with far better results than mere physical aggression. My God, why in the hell do I have to be a part of this, I berated myself again in thought. Why did I have to be the ringleader of this sickening mass of ruthless, cold-blooded killers? Why?!?

I glanced across the street, taking notice of an aging Negro woman in her early seventies clutching the rumpled, bloodied form of her half-dead, middle-aged son, half of whose face had been riddled by gunfire. I stopped again for a moment, watching the old woman's family members, including the man's children and his wife, whose stony-faced expression told of an iceberg that was ripe for cracking at the slightest instance, gather to her sides, clenching to each other and wailing out in pain as they grasped her and her fallen child. If my bills hadn't been so damned high, I would have most gladly accepted that early resignation.

Behind me, the roar of a seasoned white police veteran caught my attention as he began to scream at the family in brutish disgust. Distressed, I faced about and glared almost without expression into that mask of utter repulsion. Was that supposed to be a representative of justice, the sworn upholder of law and respect for all mankind? Like hell. He grunted his acknowledgment and passed me, stabbing his long black nightstick into the air at the family as he brandished his standard issue sidearm (regulations can be so disgusting), screaming to them that if they didn't break up and go separate ways within a matter of seconds, serious consequences would result.

Taking it as extreme offense, and that it was, a young Negro woman, eyes bulging wildly in rage, charged from the group despite frightened, staunch protests, and raced toward the officer, who smartly cracked her skull with his 'stick once she was in immediate reach. Tonight my dreams would, again, give me only another good hour's rest.

Screaming out in horror as a small number of their group had risen to escort the old woman, the other family members promptly rushed to the dying girl, cowering like simpering pups before the angry glare of the constable, who shook them back with a single wave of the nightstick. Looking back at the elder, she was putting up a delightful struggle (if the word "delightful" applied) in wanting to gather up her son's remains before the wagons collected him and numerous other dead and half-dead and dumped them off somehwere in some godforsaken ditch of dry sand a few short miles away from the village itself. The bile began to sting my throat again, like pungent acid in my esophagus. So much has happened here...so much to bear.

I managed to cross the intersection onto the next block, waving down a small squad car in the distance. A sigh, quivering me with helpless rage, escaped my lungs as my eyes glanced upon a blue corner post sign: 300 N. SOWETO ROAD, in bold letters. As the squad car pulled up, I could hear the wail of the wagons' sirens overcome the bitter screams of both law officers and the grieving native Negroes alike as I repressed angry tears. I felt a bitter hatred toward my own people, the English rejects who came over to this land and stole, through the Bible, from these poor, suffering hags and deemed them an 'inferior' lot, not to be ever associated with their 'greatness'. Sliding into the car, I muttered a silent prayer, taking one last, stressful look upon the struggling native Negroes. Dear God, I thought you made this world for all its children, for them to work together...

Kim Vollmer

CALIFORNIA

We were eleven that day. I remember her broad smile and her too-skinny eleven-year-old legs stretched out and down the steps of the porch. I just stood there before her with my moccasin boots swinging softly under the grip of my right hand. My heart beating in the pit of my stomach and my throat squeezing back and in the tiny cries. My eyes were dry, hers were wet. I didn't know what California was, or what it meant. I remember wanting to ask her as I dropped the boots on the porch. I didn't. She pulled the boots on over her tan feet. She stood up in those boots and tried to stop her own tears; she kept rubbing her eyes, and she kept crying. And I just stood there. "You'll come visit us in California," her mom assured me, assured us. "Yes," I had said. But even then I knew I'd never see those boots again

Nels Nelson

COLOMBIA

Another war?
A war on drugs.
What did they ever do?
No, a war on drug lords.
Oh Lord, who art in coca,
Pontius Bush is after you.
Silly George,
He just wants the beach-front real estate,
Gonna open a new Club Med.
Our majestic President is so awfully busy.
Hello, USA, mind your own business for a while.
Not another good war, okay?
What makes a war good?
Are there party streamers, danceable music,
Free beer and chips?
Are the people killed neatly?
"He died so politely."
"Excuse me, may I shoot out your entrails?"
"Isn't this a good war?"
Hitler thought his war to be a good one.
I don't, nor is any.
I am twenty years old.

Kim Vollmer

CAPTAIN AMERICA SHOES

Time: Middle of the night
Location: All-night diner

Four junior college students sitting in a booth, two boys and two girls. The two boys are facing each other at the front of the stage so only a profile view is seen. The two girls are beyond the boys yet they can still be seen by the audience.

Actors:
Long Haired Girl--girlfriend of and sitting beside the short haired boy
Short Haired Girl--girlfriend of and sitting beside the long haired boy
Long Haired Boy--boyfriend of and sitting beside the short haired girl
Short Haired Boy--boyfriend of and sitting beside the long haired girl
Bald Waiter (but very feminine)

Stage lights up, all four are quiet and still...
Short Haired Girl: I'm writing a play for my creative writing class at the junior college.
All eyes are upon the short haired girl.
Short Haired Girl: I'm going to write down whatever we say.
All are silent--long haired boy lights a cigarette, smokes continuously throughout play.
Short Haired Girl: *To Short Haired Boy.* Talk!
Short Haired Boy: *Shoves a mouthful of French toast in his mouth.* I'm eating
Long Haired Girl: I'll talk.
Short Haired Girl: I'm only writing down the good stuff.
Long Haired Girl: Then you're not going to portray me as I really am.
All laugh, Long Haired Girl frowns.
Short Haired Boy: *Consoling his date.* Oh, come on. Sometimes you say good stuff.
Long Haired Girl: I don't want to have any part of this.
Enter waiter to end of booth at back of stage.
Bald Waiter: High-pitched woman's voice. More coffee?
Four actors in unison: No!
Long Haired Boy looks up at the ceiling for what seems like a long time. Others then look up also. Then they look back at one another. Long Haired Boy remains with his eyes looking at the ceiling.
Short Haired Boy: *Motions to his date.* We have roaches in our apartment.
Long haired Girl: *Looking at Short Haired Boy.* Honey, don't tell.
Short Haired Boy: *Ignores her plea.* We're charging them rent. And do you know what the roaches say..*begins to laugh uncontrollably, tears come from his eyes. Long Haired Boy looks down from the ceiling now. Short Haired Boy tries to speak*...They say..*Laugh.* They say...*Cough. The girls look at him waiting for his answer.*
Short Haired Boy: They say...*Uses a deeper voice.* Sorry, man, we don't carry cash.
Both boys laugh hysterically. Both girls shake their heads in disgust.
Short Haired Boy: *To girls.* He *Motions to Long Haired Boy* and I are looking at each other and thinking to ourselves.
Both boys laugh again. Both girls look confused.
Long Haired Boy: It's getting silly.
Bald Waiter enters.
Bald Waiter: More coffee?
Four in unison: No!
Bald Waiter walks off swaying his hips.
Short Haired Boy: Don't you love playlands?

(continued)

Captain America Shoes, continued

Long Haired Girl: *Confused tone.* You mean like at Burger King?
Short Haired Boy: Or Showbiz...or...
Short Haired Girl: *Motions to Long Haired Boy.* He used to work at Showbiz!
Short Haired Boy: *Astonished.* Did you?
Long Haired Boy nods in agreement.
Short Haired Girl: Yes he did, and he wore these "Captain America Shoes."
Long Haired Girl: Really?
Long Haired Boy: Admits almost proudly. Kids used to throw up on them.
Both boys laugh.
Short Haired Boy: I love those balls that they get to jump into.
Long Haired Boy: Yeah, kids would throw up in there too.
Short Haired Boy: *Disappointed.* Ooooutt!
Long Haired Boy: They'd pee in there too, and we have to hose them all down--not the kids, the balls. Real bummers.
Short Haired Boy: *Enthusiastic again.* If you took one ball every time you went there...*Looks up. Appears to be calculating in his head.* After 500 times you'd have own playland.
Both boys overjoyed and grinning at each other.
Long Haired Boy: Yea!
Short Haired Boy: Yea!
Long Haired Girl: *To Short Haired Girl.* Fool Bonding!
Short Haired Girl: Can't a girl get a cup of coffee in this joint?
Other three in unison: No!

Shonda Talerico

THE CHINA DOLL

The Big People clung
To the China doll
Hid her away
Protected from the outside world

She grew up knowing nothing
But fairy tales and ice cream castles
Books and dreams were companions
For this lonely doll

Sometimes the Big People would play with her
And brush her dark hair
But oftentimes she would sit
And face the playroom wall

She was taught to please the Big People
So the beautiful mannequin did as she was told
Never ruffling her skirts
Or mussing her fine tresses

But it wasn't enough for the Big People
Who demanded more from the perfect marionette

Time passed for the China doll
She was hungry for more
Than dancing fairies
And sugar-coated dreams

Turning to the window
Where no fairies danced
She hopped down from the shelf on delicate feet
Drew sweet breath into her colorless face

She frolicked among
The shiny train sets
Plastic army men
And Matchbox cars

Time passed for the China doll
Who had tasted life's sweet treasures
But she became lonely
And longed for the Big People

Her curiosity satisfied, she returned
Her dark locks and creamy face
Kissed by the sunlight
Her lacy gown embraced by summer breezes

But the Big People didn't recognize
Or maybe they didn't see
Her shelf was cleaned
And occupied by a new toy

WAYFARER
JOLIET
JUNIOR
COLLEGE
GROWING
AND
BECOMING
Kim Vollmer '89

JOLIET
JUNIOR
COLLEGE
GROWING
AND
BECOMING

Kim Vollmer '89

WORDEATER 70 STAFF:

sue cherven, bob loewe, maria mellinger, nels nelson, john stobart, david l. sullivan, kim vollmer

In order to get a selection published in this issue, four of the above had to vote for acceptance. For the award winners, only John Stobart is responsible.

Manuscripts or cover designs for

wordeater 71

must be submitted to John Stobart in room C-1069 by:

February 23, 1990

Manuscripts will not be returned and should by typed.

AWARDS

POETRY

$10 to Sherry Gunderman

PROSE

$10 to Sherry Gunderman
$10 to Norma Dodge
$ 5 to Rich Goberville

COVERS

$20 to Kim Vollmer

Next Deadlines:
February 23, 1990
April 12, 1990

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Dawn Simmons

WINDOW WATCHING

Snowflakes gathered
to dance on my windowsill.
They waited
but heard no applause.

J. Ardith Cox

HEADLINES

"Three-Year-Old Boy trapped in Apartment Blaze"
"Hurricane Claims 250 Carolina Residents"
"Quake Rattles California; 75+ Death Toll"
--These lives were taken away.--

"Two Teen Found Dead: Carbon Monoxide Responsible"
"Hollywood Star Loses Life To AIDS Virus"
"U. S. Abortions Reach All-Time High In '87"
--These lives were given away.--

J. Ardith Cox

HOME-I-CIDE

A man
takes the life of a human being.
Now he
eats full meals twice a day...
sleeps in a warm bed every night...
wears clean clothing...
and lives behind bars.

Another
loses his job to modern technology.
Now he
eats rubbish out of garbage cans...
sleeps on yesterday's news...
wears discarded clothing...
and lives in a cardboard box.

--Prisons are like mansions to the homeless.--

Shonda Talerico

OBSESSION

Leaves jumping from the trees
In their autumn suicide.
I won't waste another minute crying.

But the lights are going out.
I start again.

You are gone,
I can't let you go
I want to hold you in this darkness.

It was only late last night
I knew we were through
When I began to know
That you believed it, too.

I say I don't love you,
But I'm watching the past
Play in my mind
Like a lonely album
Repeating the groove.

Was it love?

Preserving you by my side,
I dust off the glass shards
Appearing when I smashed you
Against the wall,
I hold your copy close to my heart.

Laughing to myself,
I will make this spell last forever,

In the bed of my life,
We've got all night.

When I think about it all
As I spin the loaded chamber.

Paul Pritchett

EXPERIMENT 538-4A

This is a story. The story begins by introducing the main characters. The characters engage in some humorous, romantic, sad, melancholy, angry, passionate, sexual, tiresome, boring, crazy, and monotonous times. I introduce another character who tries to stop them. He/she/they fail. The characters grow old and die

Nels Nelson

FROM DOCUMENTARY

The old womenmen took their laundry out to the stones,
The holy stones by the river,
As some red-grey cold slimed in and set itself down
In everyone's head,
Every one's head.
They all smiled, how pure they looked.
They exorcised demons from pants and shirts,
Beating them on the rocks.
Spare the rod and spoil...
Cleanliness is next to...
What is so wonderful about being next to?
Now let me set something straight for myself, excuse me,
It'll take a second.
Man created God in his image?
Oh bother, we do worship in peculiar ways,
Maybe I need a nap.
I want to beat up my clothes clean,
I'm not kidding now, something is missing,
God is not in our washing machine.

Sherry Gunderman

IMAGERY

Blueprints
of a mansion
and teardrops
of a grown child
Show a world
of love and hate
joy and sorrow
for what it truly is.

Sherry Gunderman

NINETEEN-EIGHTY-SIX

The moon
chased us
as our car passed cornfields
and farmhouses.
We hid from the future
and ignored the past.
Our juvenile sides surfaced
and we played tag
in the dusty arena
of the stable.
We scared each other
with ghost stories
that we had secretly exaggerated
and laughed at our pretended fright.
The music from our generation
echoed from the car speakers
as we waited for the heater to kick in
and we carved a jack-o-lantern together,
playing surgeon,
and throwing orange intestines at each other.
We whispered "goodnight"
at your door
and the wind blew our icy-white words
away down the street.
And my heart ached with supreme happiness
at the fact that it HAD been a "Good Night,"
and that perfection wasn't reserved
strictly for the Mature.

Norma Dodge

GROSSLY EUPHEMISTIC

To fart is to flatulate,
To spit is to expectorate,
To puke is to regurgitate,
To belch is to eructate,
To piss is to urinate,
To shit is to defecate,
To f___ is to copulate.

Fart, spit, puke, shit,
Piss and belch and f____.
The first six are only natural
As for the last--good luck!

Sherry Gunderman

THE PAPERBACK

She went into the bookstore. He followed her at a safe distance--so much so that she didn't know she was being trailed. He stood by the magazines and watched her scan through the fiction. She went to the information desk, and he ducked behind the cards and figurines. He eavesdropped terribly.

"Do you have A Room With A View by E. M. Forster?" she inquired of the clerk.

"Did you..." and he began to motion with his arm.

"No." she interrupted. "It wasn't in the fiction."

"We don't have it then. I haven't seen it around since the movie. Do you want me to order it for you?" he asked politely while his eyebrows danced with expression.

"No, thank you," she replied, and turned to leave. She hesitated to say goodbye to the kind salesperson.

"Bye-bye now!" and the information man waved. She began to leave. He went to the information desk.

"A Room With A View?" he questioned. His question was insensible, but was somehow translated by the man behind the desk.

"It's a love story about an English couple at the turn of the centuy. It's wonderful. The movie's fantastic." And he walked away humming.

He took a call card and wrote the title on it. Setting the pen that he used down, he turned to leave. She was standing in the doorway. She had heard everything and observed it all. He studied his shoes in brief embarrassment. She smiled a genuine smile meant for him alone, and disappeared into the bustle of the mall crowds.

Maria Mellinger

MY SARCASTIC SUMMER

My sarcastic summer
1942
Sleep was death's brother
And I joined you,
Draft-bait,
In dreams.

Sherry Gunderman

APRIL

Yes.
Maybe.
Definitely
    not.
Today. Tonight.
Calculations.
A green pen.
Michigan State University.
No.
Old song. Old tune.
Nonexistent.
Are my paintings still in your room?
Your face haunts me.
Your memories tease me.
He is more
    than you could dream to be.
He
is brilliant
and witty.
But not as funny...as you.
Green pen.
Red eyes.
Yellow sun.
Blue tears.
Full--for memory.

Dawn Simmons

WHEN AUTUMN PASSED

Before my steps
could crunch the leaves
the wind
took them away.
In my mind I knew
they had to go;
In my heart
I wished they would stay.

Judy Belfield

THE FIRST OF OCTOBER

This day soft yellow
slides through the blinds
lengthwise
gently oozes through the slats
like a whispered prayer.
A confession
lies in my memory
as silken as the morning's fingers.
We are afraid
of sudden moves--
the sunlight and I.
Remembering yesterdays
pierced with shrieks
in the darkness
spattered with blood
we glide carefully--
a slow-motion rippling of chiffon
through time
we've yet to know.
Now soft, now yellow,
words rest in the soul
jaundiced with disease.

Maria Mellinger

MAKING WISHES

Making wishes
With small change--
A well full of pennies
And hopeless unneeded nickels--
Somewhere,
The tally is being kept,
And maybe the millionth customer
Will be satisfied.

Joseph M. Nahas

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
It's that time of year.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
The kids are full of cheer.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
Here comes that fat ol' man.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
Ringing the bell in his mittened hand.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
He asked me for some dough.
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas
I kneed him down below.

Judy Belfield

BIRTHDAY

Sunlight bows low
in a blaze
and winks into purple black.
Redheaded trees
toss their October tresses
in sudden whips of wind.
My breath, suspended for a moment,
returns with Melancholy,
a lifelong companion
which has been absent this time
for what seemed would be
forever.
Inevitably, it comes back.
Only last week I daydreamed
what it might be like
to take someone's breath away...
there is no real connection here---
my thoughts often slip
from a word today
to something yesterday cannot release.
A choking sadness
asks me to consider
the beauty of this day
and wonder who will not be here
to see it again next year
and why.

Jacque Klika

BEFORE THE DAWN

Strings of twinkling colored lights
magically reflected the joy
of robe clad children.
Tiptoeing
before the dawn
they crept
silently
one
Christmas morn.

Jacque Klika

AFTER THE TIDE GOES OUT

There was a time once,
long ago,
when I thought
I knew you.
We kicked off our shoes
and walked through
tide pools near the
sea. And sometimes
we'd venture to the
shore and play tag
with waves hitting
the sandy beach.
But always we were
hand in hand.
Together we faced the
quiet peaceful times
as well as the challenging
moments that added spark.
Always we found meaning
in the times we shared and so now I wonder
if our love was but an illusion
...as the moon beams
dancing
over rippling waters, but
then moving on.
Will I have nothing left
but memories...like shells left
upon the shore after the tide goes out.

J. Ardith Cox

EXHAUSTED

I'm tired of trying
To catch the dreams I'll never get.
I'm tired of crying
About the goals not reached, but set.

I'm tired of holding
The bits of life I know must go.
I'm tired of molding
The perfect world I'll never know.

I'm tired of waiting
For paths to change and come my way.
I'm tired of hating
The shameful words I sometimes say.

I'm tired of giving
My heart to one who doesn't care.
I'm tired of living
A life where happy times are rare.

I'm tired of walking
Away from problems far and near.
I'm tired of talking
To people who will never hear.

I'm tired of seeing
The hurt and pain Man can't avoid.
I'm tired of being
A person whom this world's destroyed.

I'm tired of choosing
To show the feelings I should hide.
I'm tired of losing
The battles I have waged inside.

I'm tired...

Judy Belfield

BECOMING OLD

The ripest, richest moments
last as long as
we are able to breathe
their delicately fleeting scents;
wisps of time
aged to superlative edge
razor sharp against our necks,
the potential for life
as intense
as for annihilation.
I have withstood such moments;
knowing the danger,
invited return
and waited again
and again.
When the summer reeks
of its prematurely dropped fruits
(forgotten pears split open
and rotting in the heat)
I wince from the sharp pain
of a terrible memory
I cannot reconstruct
and would not dare.

Dawn Simmons

AN END

Innocence was left untouched
as a goodbye triggered
the death
of a dream just begun.
I reached to touch your lips
for the last time
and watched
as my reflection
trickled down your cheek.

Shonda Talerico

THE PAST

Concerts
with Jack Daniels tucked away

1976 Caprice Classic
with stains on the back seats

Narrow couches
made for two

Cherished love notes
on tattered looseleaf

Public displays of affection
flirting in detentions

Musical Christmas cards
alley kats and nikki

Pink Floyd
the wall

Majestic Pegasus
satin sheets

Homecoming dances
crumpled corsages

Soft back rubs
soiled handkerchiefs

"What happened to it all?"
I ask myself

As I wake up next to
last night's guy

Judy Belfield

DOG DAY

Day stretches out like
big old dog
in August
toothless, lop-eared, dusty,
heavy with fur.
Dog's lower jaw
hangs slack
saliva drooling.
Eyes have a dumb look
wet, palooka-like,
appearing, disappearing
under dull brown lids.
After awhile
secret entertainment begins.
A far-off dream plays;
dog twitches, switches its tail,
yips, yaps, squeals
then settles
into a deathlike state
wrapped up in
thick smell.
Stays that way for hours.

Rich Goberville

THE RABBITS ON MY SHELF

When I got home from work one day I went straight to my room. I threw my jacket on my bed and lay down next to it. I wondered how customers could be so rude. Like it was my fault the store was out of everything that was on sale. My weary eyes ventured to my shelf above my bed, and I noticed a little white porcelain rabbit sitting there between my clock radio and my comb. It had never been up there before, so I wondered where it could have come from. It reminded me of the real rabbit I had when I was younger. I had this little leash for it, and sometimes I would take it out of its cage and walk it in my backyard. Though I wouldn't really call it "walking," my rabbit , because it just sat there and nibbled on the grass and enjoyed the fresh summer breeze. If it were lucky, it would find a clover patch and feast on all the little flowers. Then when it finally finished eating, it would come near my face and tickle me with its whiskers. Sometimes I thought that was actually the best part of my summer days--when I would just lay next to my rabbit and forget about everything else.

But where did this rabbit on my shelf come from? I went downstairs to ask my mom and she told me that my dad got it for me. I went down to the basement where he was lifting weights and said a quick "Thank you." I really didn't know how to say thanks, though, because I didn't even know why he gave me the rabbit. It was no holiday or anything special that day. I expected a little explanation for why he gave it to me, but he just said a quick, "You're welcome."

So I was left wondering why he gave me the rabbit. Maybe it was that he noticed I had been depressed lately, and it was his way of saying, "You'll make it." Or maybe it was his way of saying, "I love you." But no matter what he meant by it, it made me feel warm. For that day, I felt as if my dad and I could understand each other perfectly, which was odd because usually I feel as though we live in different worlds.

Since that day, my dad has given me a few more rabbits. One is a carved wooden one that is stained a dark brown. Another one is a giant ceramic one that is all white. They just appear in my room for no apparent reason. Every time I look at the rabbits on my shelf, they kind of make me happy because I remember that my father cares for me. But they can also make me sad, because they also symbolize the lack of real communication between us. Our typical conversation for the day runs like this: My dad asks, "Are you going to the health club?" and I say, "No, I don't have time." Period. That's the whole conversation. Sometimes I wish we would talk more, but I really don't think he understands me as well as I would like him to. I'm the son he tries so hard to understand, but never quite can. Maybe because he was so much different when he was my age. I'm sure he wonders why I sit on my bed and try to write poetry, instead of going to the health club to lift weights and get massive muslces. And I'm sure he wonders why I never tried out for football or baseball in my life. Sure, I would play a game of football with the neighborhood kids, but I think he would have liked me to join a real team.

Sometimes I wish I could explain all of this--try to let him inside of my thoughts for just awhile, but I never seem to get the words out. One day I was thinking about how little my dad and I really talk. So I decided that I would tell him how much I appreciated him. I thought of this when I was at the mall with a friend and saw a boy and his father talking like they were best friends. Then I walked past a card shop and saw a little Indian statue in a display case. That was one thing I knew about my dad. I knew he liked Indians. He has

(continued)

The Rabbits on My Shelf, continued

loads of Indian books and even some Indian pictures on his bedroom wall. I went into the card shop and bought the little Indian.

When I got home, I set it on top of the television set in his bedroom. He came home alter that night, and when he saw the statue, my mom quickly mentioned that I had put it there. (I could hear, because my bedroom is right next to theirs.) He came to my room to say thank you, and I said, "You're welcome." Then there was a silence that grew more disturbing by the moment. Finally, my dad said, "Well, see you in the morning," and I just said, "Sure." I couldn't believe that I was so embarrassed that I couldn't even tell him why I gave him the Indian, like I planned to do. The words just stuck to the roof of my mouth like a spoonful of peanut butter. When my dad finally left my room, after what seemed forever, I had just one thought on my mind. Why is intimacy so hard for us?

Norma Dodge

THE LIFE AND LOVES OF A YUPPIE

Oh, for the life of a yuppie
Porsche, Jacuzzi, Shih Tzu puppy,
To trade one's Olds for a Mercedes
To dress in furs one's favorite ladies.

A yuppie's wife is called a yummie.
No more than two shall call her "mummy."
Golf and tennis, shops at Bloomie's
Keeps in touch with college "roomies."

Only the best address will do them.
Ten rooms is only a cottage to them.
Tennis court and swimming pool,
Nanny, nursery, private school.

Oh, for the life of a yuppie.
Porsche, Jacuzzi, Shih Tzu puppy,
Material objects must be won,
The race goes on and on and on.

Dawn Simmons

BEACHES

I can remember
sitting by the downstairs fireplace
during those frosty nights,
talking (sometimes til three),
eating popcorn and watching the fire
(it sometimes made us cry).
And I can remember
scraping the ice off the windows of my car,
the moonlight turning the snow
into fields of glitter,
and you scribbling "bye" with your finger
on the fogged-up glass of your front door.
And I can remember
driving home and feeling so grateful
that I had such a wonderful person
for a best friend.
We've gone through so much change,
and it's almost winter again.
Will there be any frosty night this year?

Sherry Gunderman

ROTORELIEF

Others
see you in the hall.
And ignore you.
Your fast-paced figure
Your downcast eyes.
You might as well
be invisible
in their world.
In mine,
you are the sun
that is hidden
behind the many clouds
shrouding my day, hopes
and dreams.
You are not reality.
Reality yells.
You whisper.
Reality blatantly battles
your subtlety.
Good luck in Boston.
I hear New England
is beautiful
in the fall.

Nels Nelson

UNEDUCABLE

I walk the floors,
These hardwood floors,
Splinters setting in the soles of my feet.
Each prick I feel,
Each gorgeous drop of blood I shed,
Represents a lesson well taught.
But I am such a poor student,
I cannot learn,
So over the same rough spots I tread.
I, the stupid man,
Soon will become rotting, grey meat.
Only then will I know of life,
Only then will I respect the floor,
After I've picked up all the splinters,
And have bled the final drop,
When I wilt to the floor,
Empty, dead

Maria Mellinger

WHILE HE REMAINED LIMITED

While he remained limited
Space-wise,
He expanded
Mind-wise,
Eternally internal,
Until the exterior's enemy
Broke through.

Joseph M. Nahas

COWBOY BOB

Cowboy Bob, a jig and a job
Jumped on his horse and soon felt the throb
With a scream and a shout then a whoop-a-dee-dee
He flew off his horse and fell to his knees.
Bob tried to get up, but the pain was too much
But he understood he couldn't hold a glutch.
With a yip and a yipe and a strutter-strut
Bob pulled himself if somewhat up.
Cowboy Bob didn't see Black Barney that day
For his hands were on the wrong trigger and they would stay.
Cowboy Bob was blasted.

Rich Goberville

FRIENDS

Burrs in my hair
Lincoln Logs
Rocks in the pool
Franks's lunch to the neighborhood dog

Drinking swigs of vinegar (Yuck!)
Playing tackle football
Egging Fat Ed's
Three man softball

Swimming at Doc's
Cushion fights in your basement
Tearing down your elaborate fort
(You didn't kill me, to my amazement)

Playing ping-pong behind our backs
Hide and Seek in the dark
Days spent at Minneoka
Fires started with just a spark

Your garden in the woods
(Which, to your doubts, I did not destroy)
Catching turtles in the pond
And snakes, which was your true joy

You getting into fights with Greg
As I watched his tears
Acorn fights at the bus stop
You getting me a job at Sears

And then Time passed
As it always seems to do
But just one night of playing pool reminded me
I still have a friend in you

J. Ardith Cox

SILENCE

"Silence is a friend who will never betray."--Confucius
"Silence is an enemy once betrayed."--J. Ardith Cox

Joseph M. Nahas

INTRO...

Sometimes you just have to pay, in order to win. When you have to invest in your problem, you want the best; someone who will get the job done, clean and effectively. There is one group that you can trust to fulfill your extermination deeds. That group is Maximum Bodycount Incorporated. M.B.I.

Rich Goberville

QUESTIONS

As I finally get in a comfortable position
to read a book,
you frighten me out of my serenity
as you jump on my lap.
I want to push you back off,
but not wanting you to feel unloved
I allow you to stay
and relax as comfortably as I used to be.
You nuzzle your head against me,
as if you need me,
and then you quickly doze off.
I watch you
in your peaceful sleep
and start to wonder
all these crazy thoughts.
I wonder if you ever feel sad,
or if you ever get bored
the way I sometimes do.
But most of all
I wonder if you feel love.
Can you feel love?
Just as my entire existence
is lost in thoughts,
you jump off my lap.
A fly buzzing by disturbed your nap
and you decide to chase it.
What silly thoughts I have.
You just proved that you are
just a "cat."
I watch you chase the fly
until your get bored.
Soon afterwards,
you jump back up on my lap
nuzzling your head against me,
as if you need me.

Maria Mellinger

JUST AS AN ENEMY

Just as an enemy
Gives thought of a friend,
The winter brings dreams
Of the summer,
The work makes the waste
Worthwhile;
My turmoil is necessary
To appreciate the peace.

Dawn Simmons

WHAT IF...?

Things really clicked
in the beginning
But you feared
a painful ending
So we had no middle
And I was left
with nothing.

Rich Goberville

WHAT TO SAY

I won't say that I can't live without you
Because I've been caught in that trap
When someone said they needed me
And I didn't care for them
But I pretended that I needed them too
Just to make them feel good
But soon the truth came out
And then we both felt like fools
No, I won't say that I can't live without you
I won't even say I care
I'll just say I love you
And just leave it at that
Because saying I love you says it all
It's not saying "Please don't leave me"
It's just saying "I want you to stay,"
But only if you love me too"

J. Ardith Cox

THEY TELL ME

They tell me
How Time
Distance,
And Loneliness
Will tear us apart.
You tell me
That Love
Can make this Dream
Survive.

They tell me
How Love,
Life,
And Happiness
Will fade from our hearts.
You tell me
That Dreams
Can keep this Flame
Alive.

They tell me
How Pride,
Want,
And Selfishness
Will not let Love last.
You tell me
That Fate
And join two hearts
As one.

They tell me
How People
Places,
And Things
Will bring back the past.
You tell me
That Nothing
Can stop a Love
Begun.

Some things they say
Seem to tell me
They don't care.
Everything you say
Seems to tell me
You love me.

Kim Vollmer

KNOW OF ME

Comforted by crickets outside my window.
They remind me that I am safe from
the person I used to be.
I will not dodge your questions.
I am protected by time.
I do not ask you what you need
Only to dangle it before your eyes.
They say you have to hide your love away.
I can't
You will know of me
from the most reliable source,
Yourself.

Clariece Henne

FEARS

Last week saw the passing of Halloween for another year. It seems there is always a lot of speculation about what it is that makes us fearful. The "Ten O'Clock News" nightly serves us a banquet of fears to choose from, if by chance we are having any difficulty finding them on our own. Take your pick: nuclear war, total damage of the environment, a mounting deficit. These fears seem somewhat remote, albeit real. Standing just a few mile markers from my half-century past, taking a good look around me--and also looking back--I'd have to say I've pretty well conquered any fears I've had. Although "conquered" may be a somewhat strong word. It conjures up a picture of someone who has done battle with great fears and has overcome them. My fears are ordinary fears shared by practically everyone I've every met: fear of the dark, fear of losing a loved one, fear of failure. Oh, I'm not trying to make my reader believe that these fears still don't raise their ugly heads occasionally. I'm just here to say that with practice I've learned to slap them down when they do. Consequently, I had the feeling that if I spent time writing about these fears, I would give them more credence than they deserve. So I choose instead to acquaint my reader with three things that make me feel secure.

We live in a big old farmhouse. In the fall when the weather turns cold, an army of mice line up with duffle bags in tow waiting for their chance to bivouac in my house. This place has become so popular, the invasion so complete, that a call to the big guns to see about extermination seemed timely. Well, now I know how

(continued)

the big guns attained their status--by charging king-size fees. We simply could not afford their services. I did not actively seek out the services of a cat, although the thought had entered my mind. I thought the problem was too big for one cat. An army of mice certainly could not be eradicated by one general.

One night, in a dreadful rainstorm, I heard a pitiful sound coming from my back-porch step. When I went to investigate, I found a tiny wet creature sorely in need of a good meal. A kitten. I brought her in, dried her off and fed her. My thoughts at the time did not go beyond giving her shelter and a meal to this stranger. But one day led to another and soon weeks had gone by. The Kitten became known as T.K. and it became crystal clear that our family had just increased by one.

What does all this have to do with feeling secure? Well that tiny homeless creature grew daily in stature, catching mouse after mouse until it was obvious she was the general I'd been looking for. The army was on the run, and soon had retreated entirely. So, I'm quite secure in the knowledge that my home will not be invaded and held under siege again. It's also a comfortable feeling to curl up on the sofa with a good book and T.K. purring on my lap--something I would not have cared to do with the Orkin man.

Speaking of curling up with a good book brings to mind another thing that makes me feel secure. My bookshelves filled with books. (I just can't abide bookshelves with plants and sculptures and photographs. Bookshelves are for books.)

Once upon a time, several years ago, I can't bear to count them, we had a snowstorm that dumped tons of snow on us. As I've mentioned before, I live in a big, old farmhouse. What I didn't say is that it's up a long lane, a lane that becomes impassable with only a couple of inches of snow. The amount of snow this particular storm dumped on us made the lane impossibly impassible. My family members were scattered hither and yon. Not one of them could make it home, and of course, there was no way for me to make it out. I listened to the weatherman report gleefully that the snow would continue, to be joined by high winds. This went on for days. I was secure in the knowledge that whatever he could dish out, I could take, because I had those shelves full of books. In fact, the storm became a welcome intruder into my daily life. Now I would have the chance to curl up on the sofa for endless hours to read without feeling guilty about not cooking supper or washing dirty socks. But all good things come to an end, and after four days, the snowplow came lumbering up the road. Soon to be followed by the school bus.

School busses--there is my third example of things that make me feel secure. Each morning as I sit by the window drinking my morning tea, planning my day, I watch the school bus go by. Some mornings it stops, the door opens, and gobbles up the little red-jacketed boy I sent down the lane. Some mornings it's a little bit bigger green-jacketed boy this huge yellow creature gobbles up. In nice weather when the windows are open, I can hear the reassuring hum of the engine that powers it on its way. I feel good every time I see the bus chugging down the road. I can't explain why, even though I have given it a lot of thought. The closest I can come to an explanation is this: No matter what I may have heard on the "Ten O'Clock News" to scare me to death, it's morning now and the methodical yellow beast is working its way up and down all the country roads, collecting our most treasured possessions. I know life will go on for at least another day. And the morning I don't see it, unless of course it's a holiday or the snow is up to my eyebrows again--that's the morning I'll begin to feel a real fear.

Nels Nelson

HEY, GOD

A caffeine tick-
Why is it always so late
When I look at the clock?
Why does smoke taste better
And the music sound tenfold more soulful?
That damn clock.
Shut up! I'm not ready for sleep.
Is it here where I will find my god?
Here, between a bedtime I don't believe in,
And my first class, which I'll skip?
Why is night so much more than day?
Is it darkness and solitude?
The lights are on, my house is full.
Could it be the moon?
Romantic fool, the moon has been written into death.
Then why the night? Tell me soon,
The price of a night is rising,
And I still have no answers.
Who is this nowhere man?

Judy Belfield

SHOWDOWN

Your eyes fixed in
a too-long stare
the green blurring before me
narrowing as pupils expand
locking up the me I was
a moment before
tossing out all trace of humor
for this deadly confrontation:
a secret dare you issue
without a word
(humiliating my sense of what's what,
challenging me to run, to speak,
but I will not).
We wait
smoldering, stubborn;
perhaps time will suddenly
open up and scream
til our eardrums split.
This never happens.
Instead, one of us always
looks away.

Mike Carter

EVILDOER
CHAPTER 1: THE WOMAN

She paced inside the building of the gas station. She had her money in hand and as she walked back and forth, expressing her anger at the attendant she waved it around. Several times as she turned, she almost knocked one of the candy racks over.

Elmer was about to jump over the counter when he saw this. His station was his most prized possession in the world. He didn't want any woman messing things up. He could have seen this woman coming. When she put her gas in her car herself, she had been complaining to the air. Now she was complaining to him about the state that a country would have to be in to make a woman of her caliber pump her own gas and almost break a nail. He made every attempt to calm her. Under his breath, he even offered to kiss her feet if she would just leave him alone.

The woman's tirade about the dispensing of gasoline escalated. To her, though, this was no speech about gas. It was her personal crusade for everyone to treat her like a queen. She treated every subject the same way. Every time she had to open a door for herself or pull a chair out to sit down, she would start up a long argument with the nearest man about common courtesy. With her being an extremely unattractive woman, this happened a lot.

The woman's anger began to transfer to Elmer. Enough is enough, he thought. What is so important about the pumping of gas? He broke off the woman in mid-sentence. "Please, Miss. Would you just pay and leave already?" He took a step back and waited for a reaction.

To this, the woman practically exploded in anger. What right did this little peasant of a man have to insult her in this way? Fed up with the man, she threw the money at him and stormed to the door. As she left, she knocked the candy rack over that she had previously bumped.

Elmer stood thinking for a moment. Before he had had some doubts, but that final antic of knocking over the candy rack proved it. He had to go to higher authority on this one. He gathered up the money and walked to the back room. He sat at the altar. With a wooden match cut from a 666-year-old tree on Friday the 13th, he lit the thirteen candles that formed a semi-cirlce in front of him. He hummed a tune in a deep voice and said a few words of Latin needed to summon the Lord of the Flies. Soon, he would come.

Nels Nelson

FOR AN OLD SOUL

Again I find myself
Wanting to give to yourself.
But what?
Ink and paper?
No, I have more, just let me look for it.
Things are so unkempt, you see.
To give, but how?
Oh, I'm just a boy.
But what a boy!
No, a just-boy.
Just a boy who has learned
to fall quietly,
To be a fool
Quietly.

Sherry Gunderman

FATE

I can cry
a thousand tears
for the one
who'll never hear

But for you
I'll simply sing
this silent song

Far away
and long ago
I left him standing
in the snow

But you are different
because it's summer
in our world

And if my mention
of the past
caused your eyes
to downwards cast

I'm sorry
I never meant
to hurt your pride

He is gone
and you are here
the message
is so clear

But I know the truth
and fate
will have its way

When you go
I will not cry
Don't look back
I'll dry my eyes

Have fun
going abroad
But think of me

Because your face
will haunt me too
and knowing you're
with someone new

Will hurt
As I'm destined
To walk alone.

Sherry Gunderman

SURREALISM

Why
are you alone?
You walk to
class & swing
your bag
and take large
steps
to make your height
seem more
and to accommodate
your stride.
You move so quickly
that others
may not try
to see though your
transparent spirit.
Don't slow down--
movement and action
baffle the eye.
And you
can remain
anonymous...
forever.

Maria Mellinger

YOU CAN GET ANOTHER

You can get "another"
Of almost anything
In this world.
It's the attachment
To the "one"
That makes it special.

Paul Pritchett

ZEN FRENCH FRY

I think it's
really interesting
how you don't
have to mention
the title of
a poem, in
the poem itself.

Maria Mellinger

A SWEET SILENCE

A sweet silence
On the phone;
And in the background,
The laughter of others
In the room...
Your breathing,
An occasional heavy sigh;
My favorite conversation...

Shonda Talerico

GOD, I'M STARVING

Rover gulps down Gravy Train
As a family chokes down their meal of grain
At the feast delicious desserts are passed
As dry bread crumbs are divided to make them last

"GOD, I'M STARVING!" belched the fat man.
"God, I'm starving," implored the dirty waif.

Half-chewed sandwiches tossed by the street
As hungry children wish for a hunk of meat
Slippery popcorn tossed around the show
Barren fields where nothing will grow

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Day-old donuts are trashed
Bums retrieve dinner before it's smashed
Baseball hot dogs bought for $5
Mama's thin milk won't keep baby alive

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Catching butter sauce dribbling down his chin
Charity clatters in the rusty tin
Stuffing Twinkies into shopping bags
Finding lunch among soiled rags

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Caramel crushed in a sidewalk groove
Mama's baby won't move
Catsup covers a crispy fry
A hopeless tear hovers in her eye

"GOD, I'M STARVING!"
"God, I'm starving."

Sherry Gunderman

THE CAFETERIA

The deepness of the moment
suffocated her.
She bit her lip
and pretended to ignore
his stupidity.

She left,
without a backwards glance,
and cursed him
into eternal damnation
for all of his cruel ignorance.

Her stride picked momentum.
She hated the anonymous blond
She hated her friend
She hated him
And she hated herself--for caring.

"Why is this HAPPENING??"
She demanded of the air.
No reply came.
The Future stood at the door waiting patiently for her
And she walked past him.

Maria Mellinger

IN A MOST DIRTY

In a most dirty,
Childish, and
Vindictive way,
I have snatched
My friendship back
From you,
And hidden it
In the alleyway.
Maybe there
It will find
Fish bones
Or pleasant felines
To associate with,
Which can be
No worse
Than you.

Sherry Gunderman

A MEETING WITH THE STRANGER

I met him.
The brown-eyed boy...
with the beautiful hair
that had one miniature braid
skipping down the right side of his bangs.

He complimented me
that brown-eyed boy...
he liked my sweater.
"Sharp" was the quote.
And I replied "thank you" in an innocent whisper.

He knows.
That brown-eyed boy knows
that my heart beats faster when he's in the room.

And he stared at me.
The brown-eyed boy sure stared--
and saw my soul through his brown eyes.
I only wish
he was worth getting to know.

Kim Vollmer

NO STRINGS

no strings
no attachment--no detachment
no giving--no taking
no staying--no leaving
no charge--no refund
no problem
we don't have any strings
in our relationship
we have this invisible force
we are surrounded by something
that keeps us
when we are together
and holds us when we are
apart
no strings
this is what we've become
I don't feel bad when you're away
but I don't feel good anymore

Sherry Gunderman

ADOLESCENCE

dusty country roads
full harvest moons
king-of-the-mountain
mosquito bites
ice-skating
sunburn
black and white movies
snowball fights
mayonnaise jars full of lightning bugs
horse shows
4-H
picnics
chlorine
kittens
snow angels
corn on the cob
convertibles
county fairs
sleepovers
scary stories
inseparable friends
Perfection
Childhood.

Nels Nelson

WHOOOHOOHOOOO

The music starts, oozing out of the speakers,
Kisses me open mouth on the forehead,
Sloppy, wet, luscious,
Calling me across the world
To far India,
Farther, into space.
Seductive, it wears a dress slit to the hip,
"Do you want to dance?"
Oh, I need to dance.
"Then come with me, into me."
She, my music, leads me, tickles,
Smiling.
God, I could piss my pants!
"Don't postpone joy," she shrieks.
My word!
The final beats of a drum
Lead me into spectral orgasm.

Sherry Gunderman

THE STRANGER

Things
are strange.
The long-awaited dream
is now reality.
Now...that happiness
is around the corner
(I can hear its footsteps & happy whistling)
my eyes have a tendency
to wander.
My green eyes
stray to his brown ones
And I admire
his hair--his stance--his style.
He captures me
and smiles with interest.
I feel overwhelming lashes
of shame and guilt
for studying a stranger's features
when my future
is waiting at the door.

Peace

FRONT DESK

One more shot
that's all I got
'til I go back to hell
If you need to get in
a tad more gin
just ring the little bell
An eight hour shift
then I will drift
into an astral week
Hump day comes
to jazz the ones
diligent to meet
weekend flies
through lazy skies
my head fills with games
Night tolls on
the clock says "BONG"
and billows out the names
Names I will remember

Maria Mellinger

THE BEST LAID PLANS

The best laid plans
Of the hunger artist
Are plowed, devoured, destroyed
By the tip of the doctor's
Opera hat
As he exits the hospital room.

Jacque Klika

REPLAY

Angry, hurtful
words exchanged
have left their wounds
which memories refuse to forget.
Years of pain
surface again
and again they slice through fragile egos.
He said, she said...
who remembers well?
Yet over and over they play in future
incidents. Our hope
is built on sand
when we can not
forgive, forget.
Instead...we replay
again, and again.
And who's to blame?

Maria Mellinger

WE'VE RUBBER CEMENTED

We've rubber cemented
Our lives together,
Like two kindergarten
Construction paper hearts.
And the only trouble is that
Gloppy stuff that peels off
At the edges.

Nels Nelson

DANCING IN BLUE, PLAYING TO YELLOW

I see now
Where Matisse found the yellow
In jazz.
The blue I could understand,
And the black figure, of course,
Dancing,
But the yellow, it can't
Just represent stars in
Jazz air.
It could have been
The lick of light off of a horn,
Or the musicians, dancing in blue,
Do you see where I'm heading with this?
It is all logical.
What I'm trying to say
Is that being a black figure
Dancing in jazz blue,
Is a soulless exercise
Without a little you,
Yellow.

Sherry Gunderman

MY HEART CAN'T TELL YOU NO

The memories
of last year
have been chipping
and blowing away
on the winds of the present
To the tempo
of a solitary
guitar
And the pattern
of incessant
teardrops.

Judy Belfield

SPORT

Hell is a baseball game
in the city
in July at night
when there isn't a breeze
and it's so hot
the stars sweat
and all the vendors' shirts
are soaked through.
The smell of hot dogs and beer
and steamed cement
are trapped in the smoke
from a thousand cigarettes
and hangs in a cloud
under the lights.
Sixth inning,
kids squirm, some people are
incredibly drunk;
bats tick, clank, tick again;
a whistle
shoots out from
the crowd's hum;
a yell, another whistle,
hum
and then, a hit
cheers, everybody stands
the smoke cloud shifts slightly
the heat closes in
strangles.
This is hell.
We love it.

Sherry Gunderman

THE DATE

Brian wasn't really a Brian. Now, of course, he was, because that was his name--given at birth, the name was christened by, and the name that he had signed on his homework assignments since kindergarten.

I studied the exquisite creature next to me as he shifted the navy Escort from first to second and imagined him with a soap-opera name. In MY mind, Brian was a Miles or Drew or Sebastian or Ashley...something exotic or hopelessly romantic that would send shivers of excitement up the spines of Folger's French Roast commercial producers and seduce Harlequin editors into publication.

Brian caught me staring and interrupted my daydreams with a logical question. "Turn here?"

"Yah," I answered.

Brian had long hair...and when I say long I mean longer than shoulder length. He had a habit of pushing it behind his ears (where it never stayed) and then rubbing his nose where his glasses rested.

Whatever glamour his name lacked, his impeccable style made up for. Brian was intellectual, worldly, and one-hundred percent artistic. He saw sculptures in old bedsprings that I would have given to Joe the garbage man without a second thought. I wondered why I never felt intimidated by his overwhelming knowledge of everything under the sun. Friends assured me that it was all quite logical: Opposites attract. I decided that he was no smarter than me...we simply never agreed on taste and style--therefore, we never ran out of things to debate about.

This was our second date--our second excursion to Chicago, and our second day spent at art exhibits. he had done all the planning for this day. We were going to see the Andy Warhol exhibit that was on display at the Art Institute. He handed me a pre-paid ticket as we walked from the cavernous parking garage and into the blinding light of a June afternoon.

We dodged traffic with urban expertise and walked up the shallow marble steps as the art connoisseurs we presumed ourselves to be. The exhibit was impressive. Brian and I stood next to each other and critiques Campbell's soup cans and criticized a purple Marilyn and cringed over grisly views of death in a kaleidoscope of colors.

We walked through a room done completely in nauseatingly neon yellow with purple cow portraits smiling boldly out at us from their paper captivity. I snickered quietly as he shaded his eyes from the gaudiness of the room. Brian was a true comedian. Of course, I had to pry like a grave-robber to come to that conclusion.

He was my biggest conquest. I drooled over his mystique for a semester in an art history class. I followed him and learned his schedule and giggled like a psychotic seventh-grader. I identified his truck and backpack and stealthy footsteps. I studied his profile and adored his dimples and knew what brand of gym shoes he wore. I fed my obsession by reading books that I saw him reading and tried to psychoanalyze his scribblings that were bound in a maroon notebook.

Who he was and what he was about was the core of my being for a span of four months. Then (God forbid) I began to TALK to him. I interrupted his studies and

(continued)

made small talk that he elaborated on. The last day of class found us walking out together after our final...which was tremendously ironic because this WAS so final...and I bravely asked him for his telephone number. He gave it to me eagerly, handing me a pen and paper, and smiled "goodbye" as I blushed uncontrollably.

Four days later I used that number, and he asked me to an art exhibit on Navy Pier. it was beautiful. It was impressive. And the clip from that day will haunt me forever was simply sitting on a bench that overlooked the lake and talking about life. The city of Chicago was on our right, and seagulls dove at the water in front of us. Church chimes tattled the hour and continued to play quiet hymns through the misty pink sky.

We saw each other in the hall at summer school and spent hours laughing together over the phone. I knew that he had already graduated from our junior college with an Associates Degree, but wasn't prepared when the day came...

Brian stopped me in the hall. He was so cute the way he looked nervous and shifted his stance and played with his glasses when he talked to me. He told me that he had won the scholarship that he had applied for.

"A twelve-thousand dollar scholarship?" I gaped.

He smiled with pride. "Yep! I'm going to an orientation in July and leaving in August for good."

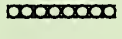
Leaving. Going going gone. This college that he had won such a prestigious and impressive scholarship to was on the East Coast. This college was far faaaar away from Marquette and his home and the incredible Chicago art galleries that we had spent hours in...and me. I didn't think that we had some passionate love affair blossoming or anything as flamboyant as all that, but I enjoyed cutting down Cezanne and Picasso with him. I felt liberated from slapstick when he shone his dry humor my way, and I liked him.

It was some obscure time between that day in the orange hallway at school and when we stood admiring Warhol that both of our attitudes must have changed drastically. We didn't talk as much. Maybe if we knew less about each other, it would hurt less when he left. Our humor turned into serious discussion about school and the future and how he WANTED to go away, but he also wanted to stay. He told me more than twice that he would like to go to our junior college for one more year to take art courses...not stuffy business courses. I wanted him to stay another year too, but never told him. From my lips he heard about how exciting this new school would be, and how lucky he was that he was going exactly where he had wanted to go, and that he was going to go far in life. Far. Far away.

We left the Warhol exhibit and wandered through every other room that the Art Institute had to show. We sat on benches next to each other and laughed at how we disagreed on EVERY piece of artwork we talked about. Somehow, the whole time we laughed and talked, I knew that this was the end. things were too different between us to ever work out. He was too mature for his age, and I was too immature for mine. Yet his pensiveness fascinated me--and I studied him with the serenity of a child watching a pinwheel spin. My adolescent humor intrigued him and he listened to my thoughts with genuine interest. but the fascination and intrigue whispered empty promises to each of us. His East Coast scholarship waited, as did my rowdy friends at the junior college where Brian and I had met.

I told myself that we really had nothing in common. Infatuation with a stranger had been so much more fun. I never saw or spoke to the mysterious Brian after that sunny day we spent in the art museum. Fall semester started soon after that, and I went back to my reality as he jetted off to his. I sat in rhetoric classes and read school papers that were filled with poetry and prose. Among the names listed on the credit page was Brian's. I tore to his poems and found them full of melancholy messages of leaving home and everything familiar behind. I never knew that he wrote poetry. Sure, he painted abstract paintings full of earth tones and listened to The Cure and "The Graduate" was his favorite movie and blue was his favorite color. He hated Lima beans (doesn't everyone?) and he worked for his father, and he was Protestant, and a Pisces, and he watched soap operas...but did I ever really know him?

I laugh at myself now for thinking that I knew so much about Brian when my knowledge was so shallow. I wonder what he had been thinking when he held my hand beneath Gustave Caillebotte's "Place de l'Europe on a Rainy Day," a cityscape done at the turn of the century--a twenty-foot tall oil painting that gave moody depth to a rainy day in the city--where strangers walked past each other on the street, and everyone hid beneath umbrellas--to escape the bleak drizzle...and to protect their own anonymity.



Norma Dodge

A LOVE STORY

My husband, when you look at me so dully, with eyes that were once so brightly blue, my heart breaks anew over the tragedy that has befallen us.

You were so happy, so active, so full of life, and so full of pleasure in that life, and now you are so helpless, and what is worse, unable to communicate to me in any way. Sometimes I feel that there is a spark of recognition in your eyes, or an answering pressure when I hold your hands in mine, but the doctors tell me I must not hope--they cannot tell me not to pray.

Our children have shown such strength and support. Debbi stays with us and helps me with your care, and Allison comes over as often as she can. Our son, who is stationed so far away, has been home to visit you. Though you do not know that he was here, I was strengthened by his love and deep concern for us.

Our two teen-aged grandsons came to see you, though they feel uncertain and uncomfortable. they find it hard to realize how ill you are until they see you. Though they are so "grown up," they wipe away tears as they leave your bedside.

Allison's five-year-old son, your "little Lukey," asks when Grandpa will be well, "so he will know me again."

Steven and Leslie, who, at the age of three, do not understand illness, peek in and ask when Grandpa is going to wake up. Baby Meghan gives you a butterfly kiss, and gently pats your cheek. She will be taught to say, "I love you, Grandpa," even though you will never hear or understand her.

Oh, my dear, when I lie sleepless at night, crying for the husband I once knew, I know that the tears that fall so freely are not tears of self-pity, but tears of grief for the strong, handsome, laughing man who is hidden forever behind that uncomprehending gaze with which your eyes meet mine.

I pray anew for the strength to see me through to what can only be a tragic ending to the many years of love we shared.

Rich Goberville

WHY I WRITE ABOUT LOVE

I was told by some to write about something other than love. That just reminded me of something. I remember when I was little (maybe twelve) and my dream was to become a song writer. When I listened to songs on the radio, they all seemed to be about love, and I didn't understand why. I told myself I would revolutionize all of that. If I ever had out an album of my own, there would be no love songs on it. I would have every other imaginable subject, but no love songs.

But that was before I actually fell in love. Sure, I loved my parents and other relatives, but I mean the kind of love where you want to spend your whole life together. Since than, it seems to control every ounce of my soul, every beat of my existence. I guess that's what the teenage years are all about, trying to find out what love really is (and maybe writing some stupid sounding poems because you're not really sure yet).

But to me, writing is a type of therapy. Not to say that I'm just writing a journal. I try to write my poems so that others can relate to them and, hopefully, enjoy them. But mostly, it's a learning process for me. Until I find out what love really means, I don't think I will be able to stop writing about it. Sometimes I really try to write something light-hearted, but it always seems to end up on a serious note. I can try to write more "non-love" poems or stories, but I don't think I can totally stop writing love poems, because they are the ones with the most meaning to me.

Rich Goberville

SECURITY

I observe the world
through my bedroom window
enclosed in a separate world
one that I say I like to be in
I can see rainbows from here
without having to be in the rain
I can see love from here
without actually tasting the pain
and in the bitter cold of winter
I sit warmed by my heater
and in the withering heat of summer
I sit cooled by my fan
yes, I have everything
enclosed in my private space
everything I need
will someone get me out of here?

Sherry Gunderman

THREE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The wind
courted the leather-brown leaves,
and asked them to dance.
And the leaves accepted.
I watched the giggling leaves from my first-floor window
as they skipped away down the wet
night street--
they were entranced by the wind,
and ignored my presence.

I put my hand to the glass
as if to stop them
from leaving
and left fingerprints on the window.
Nostalgia settled
and my heart wept in agony.
Halloween.
Happy Happy Halloween.
My favorite holiday.
Three years since our eyes first met.
One year since I last heard your voice.

Three years since I became
unexplainably happy.
Three years since
the curtain of impending pain
was lowered over my happiness
like a gauzy shear.

Three years of the happiest.
Three years of the saddest--
because you left me
on a sunny day
to begin a new life.
And your empty air
could not be filled by another.
Happy Halloween.

Three anniversary.
I watched the dead leaves
somersault in the air
and called out to them--
not to go...

Because no other leaves
would ever be as beautiful.

Melynda Findlay

A NEW CAR

It was the summer of 1987 and suddenly there were four drivers in my family--well, sort of. Of course my mom, my dad, and I drove. My brother was trying to. After twelve tries, he finally had his license--but needless to say, my parents were hesitant about letting him take the car. So, with three regular drivers and only two cars, transportation was always a problem. We had this horrible electric blue station wagon and a Nova. I drove the Nova most of the time, which I didn't mind. It wasn't too bad. The station wagon was another story, however. Its only redeeming quality was that it didn't have wood on the sides. It has this putrid color of electric blue (METALLIC electric blue) and it had no radio. Even an AM radio that only picked up country-western stations would have been noise at least. Then came the fateful day that my parents decided it was time to buy a new car. I was excited at first; I though my family would finally get a nice four-door luxury car like every other family in America. But NO! Our family has never had a normal car. Besides the "electric blue" (as we fondly refer to the wagon) and the Nova, we've had two Vegas, a big rusty white station wagon, and a Maverick. Well, God forbid my parents should break their dorky trend buying embarrassing cars.

"We're buying a Ford Aerostar!" my dad announced proudly. (Oh, as if that's something to brag about.) An oversized loaf of bread that looks like some sort of demented insect.

"It'd be a lot cheaper to get a Buick Regal, Dad," I replied attempting to appeal to his sense of frugality.

"Not really. Just think, we could bring Duffy with us when we go to Sharon and George's this summer," my mom gushed.

Oh, super. "Just take me to hell now, Lord," I mumbled. Sharon and George's? A mini-van? Take the dog on vacation? Yes, hell would be a holiday compared to this vacation. Sharon and George are my parents' friends. They live in a resort town in northern Wisconsin. I HATE them for two reasons: 1) they are always trying to fix me up with their dweebo son, David, and; 2) they won't let me take showers. they expect me to bathe in their lake, with the fish! I just don't think so! And bring our dog Duffy along? Oh that would be a joy. Duffy weighs about 90 pounds, is a little *too* friendly, and has the *worst* dog breath *I've* ever experienced. Yes, I'd be spending this summer in Purgatory. Anyway, back to the New mini-van. Mom

(continued)

A New Car, continued

and Dad took Marc and I to the car lot in Naperville to see it. "Keep an open mind," I kept telling myself.

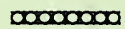
Well, it wasn't *that* bad. Actually it was that bad, but one important feature made the embarrassment seem worthwhile--AM/FM cassette with separate tuners and headphone jacks in the back seats!

"So what do you think?" dad asked.

"I'm likin' the radio," I replied.

I guess the car was almost cool with the radio, so my parents found another van that they liked "better." Figures. This one only had an AM radio--but it had one feature that no "dorky" car can be without--a car top carrier. My dad sacrificed a real radio for a car top carrier. Did the embarrassment never cease?

Well, in closing, I must admit I actually don't mind traveling in the "Wonder Bread Van!" I can't say whether I like driving it--the folks won't let me touch it. Well, I guess that's okay. It's touch to see with a grocery bag over your head.



David L. Sullivan, Jr.

SOWETO ROAD: A STORY OF THE AMERICAN NEAR-FUTURE

(After the Great Civil Conflict, circa 2017)

The blood mingles with the sand of the dusty road as the sand particles ride atop the puddles themselves like crude oil rising in stagnant colored water. The potholes begin to fill with the stuff as a stench more foul than that produced by skunks stabs at my nostrils, making me choke back bitter bile. Soon the wagons would come to collect the tortured and dead bodies of the day's 'catch.'

There is a small young Negro girl, seven, screaming her head off with eternal force, her small body convulsing on the old street corner, the face twisted in rage and grief. I gaze at her tear-stained face, caked with dust brought by the warm breeze of the early afternoon. Lord God in Heaven Above, I growl to myself in thought. How should any creature, especially as young and precious as this mere baby, this innocent human being, be subjected to such blindness and carnage as this? The thought perplexed me with increasing intensity as I continued to study the child, who had fallen unsteadily on her knees before her dead mother, her body riddled with bruises, in some places the flesh grotesquely torn to reveal tender pink flesh oozing brilliant crimson red blood down onto the street below. Swallowing my bile, I turn away and change direction.

Continuing my slow plod, I came upon a Negro youngster of good height and excellent build being brutally forced out of a rotting shack by six white and two black officers wearing full riot gear. Frowning in disgust, I clenched my teeth in silent rage as they pummeled the boy with bone-crushing blows. Deep pink and red bruises began to take appearance in various places along the boy's upper torso. Soon, the pain had become too unbearable, so the youngster viciously twisted and broke away from the mob, racing at astonishing speed toward the village's old mill.

Acting quickly, one of the white officers, a brutish, hulking mass of flesh with the obvious name of Crusher, snatched out his standard issue revolver and began blasting away at the boy as shouts of pain and horror reared from every face that was not police, whether white or black. In a few moments it was over as abruptly as it had started, for one of the projectiles scored a direct hit on the boy's skull, spewing blood, bone, and brain into the air as the body twitched nervously before collapsing to the ground. Another 'catch,' another paycheck. To them, it was one more step toward material satisfaction. Suddenly I felt a warm pressure along my right jaw followed by a gooey, oozing wetness. I looked to my right and then, quite astonishingly, down.

It was a small Negro boy, much like the one who had just gotten killed but much less refined, physically and psychologically. I could tell that the child's actual age was about thirteen or fourteen, but from the hard lines coursing around his eyes further complimented by caked dust gave him the look of forty. He was screaming curses at me in his native tongue, but the words were more like well-honed spears striking into my heart, driving me toward the pit of extinction. I was petrified during this time, unable to move a single muscle as the child started striking me in the side. A few moments later, I snapped back into alertness and, quite accidentally, pushed the child into the ground hard, whereas I had meant only to cast him aside; his head struck the crude pavement on the curb.

Carefully wiping the warm ooze off my cheek, I glanced at the boy numb with confusion as he leaped off the curb, lips swollen and bloody, and he began to his refutation again, this time around with a violent intensity that rivaled God's own wrath. I turned away and plodded on in shame, vaguely expecting him to follow. Instead, he did not, choosing to remain to stand his ground upon the dusty street itself while his words

(continued)

Soweto Road, continued

struck with greater tenacity, with far better results than mere physical aggression. My God, why in the hell do I have to be a part of this, I berated myself again in thought. Why did I have to be the ringleader of this sickening mass of ruthless, cold-blooded killers? Why?!?

I glanced across the street, taking notice of an aging Negro woman in her early seventies clutching the rumpled, bloodied form of her half-dead, middle-aged son, half of whose face had been riddled by gunfire. I stopped again for a moment, watching the old woman's family members, including the man's children and his wife, whose stony-faced expression told of an iceberg that was ripe for cracking at the slightest instance, gather to her sides, clenching to each other and wailing out in pain as they grasped her and her fallen child. If my bills hadn't been so damned high, I would have most gladly accepted that early resignation.

Behind me, the roar of a seasoned white police veteran caught my attention as he began to scream at the family in brutish disgust. Distressed, I faced about and glared almost without expression into that mask of utter repulsion. Was that supposed to be a representative of justice, the sworn upholder of law and respect for all mankind? Like hell. He grunted his acknowledgment and passed me, stabbing his long black nightstick into the air at the family as he brandished his standard issue sidearm (regulations can be so disgusting), screaming to them that if they didn't break up and go separate ways within a matter of seconds, serious consequences would result.

Taking it as extreme offense, and that it was, a young Negro woman, eyes bulging wildly in rage, charged from the group despite frightened, staunch protests, and raced toward the officer, who smartly cracked her skull with his 'stick once she was in immediate reach. Tonight my dreams would, again, give me only another good hour's rest.

Screaming out in horror as a small number of their group had risen to escort the old woman, the other family members promptly rushed to the dying girl, cowering like simpering pups before the angry glare of the constable, who shook them back with a single wave of the nightstick. Looking back at the elder, she was putting up a delightful struggle (if the word "delightful" applied) in wanting to gather up her son's remains before the wagons collected him and numerous other dead and half-dead and dumped them off somehwere in some godforsaken ditch of dry sand a few short miles away from the village itself. The bile began to sting my throat again, like pungent acid in my esophagus. So much has happened here...so much to bear.

I managed to cross the intersection onto the next block, waving down a small squad car in the distance. A sigh, quivering me with helpless rage, escaped my lungs as my eyes glanced upon a blue corner post sign: 300 N. SOWETO ROAD, in bold letters. As the squad car pulled up, I could hear the wail of the wagons' sirens overcome the bitter screams of both law officers and the grieving native Negroes alike as I repressed angry tears. I felt a bitter hatred toward my own people, the English rejects who came over to this land and stole, through the Bible, from these poor, suffering hags and deemed them an 'inferior' lot, not to be ever associated with their 'greatness'. Sliding into the car, I muttered a silent prayer, taking one last, stressful look upon the struggling native Negroes. Dear God, I thought you made this world for all its children, for them to work together...

Kim Vollmer

CALIFORNIA

We were eleven that day. I remember her broad smile and her too-skinny eleven-year-old legs stretched out and down the steps of the porch. I just stood there before her with my moccasin boots swinging softly under the grip of my right hand. My heart beating in the pit of my stomach and my throat squeezing back and in the tiny cries. My eyes were dry, hers were wet. I didn't know what California was, or what it meant. I remember wanting to ask her as I dropped the boots on the porch. I didn't. She pulled the boots on over her tan feet. She stood up in those boots and tried to stop her own tears; she kept rubbing her eyes, and she kept crying. And I just stood there. "You'll come visit us in California," her mom assured me, assured us. "Yes," I had said. But even then I knew I'd never see those boots again

Nels Nelson

COLOMBIA

Another war?
A war on drugs.
What did they ever do?
No, a war on drug lords.
Oh Lord, who art in coca,
Pontius Bush is after you.
Silly George,
He just wants the beach-front real estate,
Gonna open a new Club Med.
Our majestic President is so awfully busy.
Hello, USA, mind your own business for a while.
Not another good war, okay?
What makes a war good?
Are there party streamers, danceable music,
Free beer and chips?
Are the people killed neatly?
"He died so politely."
"Excuse me, may I shoot out your entrails?"
"Isn't this a good war?"
Hitler thought his war to be a good one.
I don't, nor is any.
I am twenty years old.

Kim Vollmer

CAPTAIN AMERICA SHOES

Time: Middle of the night
Location: All-night diner

Four junior college students sitting in a booth, two boys and two girls. The two boys are facing each other at the front of the stage so only a profile view is seen. The two girls are beyond the boys yet they can still be seen by the audience.

Actors:
Long Haired Girl--girlfriend of and sitting beside the short haired boy
Short Haired Girl--girlfriend of and sitting beside the long haired boy
Long Haired Boy--boyfriend of and sitting beside the short haired girl
Short Haired Boy--boyfriend of and sitting beside the long haired girl
Bald Waiter (but very feminine)

Stage lights up, all four are quiet and still...
Short Haired Girl: I'm writing a play for my creative writing class at the junior college.
All eyes are upon the short haired girl.
Short Haired Girl: I'm going to write down whatever we say.
All are silent--long haired boy lights a cigarette, smokes continuously throughout play.
Short Haired Girl: *To Short Haired Boy.* Talk!
Short Haired Boy: *Shoves a mouthful of French toast in his mouth.* I'm eating
Long Haired Girl: I'll talk.
Short Haired Girl: I'm only writing down the good stuff.
Long Haired Girl: Then you're not going to portray me as I really am.
All laugh, Long Haired Girl frowns.
Short Haired Boy: *Consoling his date.* Oh, come on. Sometimes you say good stuff.
Long Haired Girl: I don't want to have any part of this.
Enter waiter to end of booth at back of stage.
Bald Waiter: High-pitched woman's voice. More coffee?
Four actors in unison: No!
Long Haired Boy looks up at the ceiling for what seems like a long time. Others then look up also. Then they look back at one another. Long Haired Boy remains with his eyes looking at the ceiling.
Short Haired Boy: *Motions to his date.* We have roaches in our apartment.
Long haired Girl: *Looking at Short Haired Boy.* Honey, don't tell.
Short Haired Boy: *Ignores her plea.* We're charging them rent. And do you know what the roaches say...*begins to laugh uncontrollably, tears come from his eyes. Long Haired Boy looks down from the ceiling now. Short Haired Boy tries to speak...*They say...*Laugh.* They say...*Cough. The girls look at him waiting for his answer.*
Short Haired Boy: They say...*Uses a deeper voice.* Sorry, man, we don't carry cash.
Both boys laugh hysterically. Both girls shake their heads in disgust.
Short Haired Boy: *To girls.* He *Motions to Long Haired Boy* and I are looking at each other and thinking to ourselves.
Both boys laugh again. Both girls look confused.
Long Haired Boy: It's getting silly.
Bald Waiter enters.
Bald Waiter: More coffee?
Four in unison: No!
Bald Waiter walks off swaying his hips.
Short Haired Boy: Don't you love playlands?

(continued)

Captain America Shoes, continued

Long Haired Girl: *Confused tone.* You mean like at Burger King?
Short Haired Boy: Or Showbiz...or...
Short Haired Girl: *Motions to Long Haired Boy.* He used to work at Showbiz!
Short Haired Boy: *Astonished.* Did you?
Long Haired Boy nods in agreement.
Short Haired Girl: Yes he did, and he wore these "Captain America Shoes."
Long Haired Girl: Really?
Long Haired Boy: Admits almost proudly. Kids used to throw up on them.
Both boys laugh.
Short Haired Boy: I love those balls that they get to jump into.
Long Haired Boy: Yeah, kids would throw up in there too.
Short Haired Boy: *Disappointed.* Oooouttt!
Long Haired Boy: They'd pee in there too, and we have to hose them all down--not the kids, the balls. Real bummers.
Short Haired Boy: *Enthusiastic again.* If you took one ball every time you went there...*Looks up. Appears to be calculating in his head.* After 500 times you'd have own playland.
Both boys overjoyed and grinning at each other.
Long Haired Boy: Yea!
Short Haired Boy: Yea!
Long Haired Girl: *To Short Haired Girl.* Fool Bonding!
Short Haired Girl: Can't a girl get a cup of coffee in this joint?
Other three in unison: No!

Shonda Talerico

THE CHINA DOLL

The Big People clung
To the China doll
Hid her away
Protected from the outside world

She grew up knowing nothing
But fairy tales and ice cream castles
Books and dreams were companions
For this lonely doll

Sometimes the Big People would play with her
And brush her dark hair
But oftentimes she would sit
And face the playroom wall

She was taught to please the Big People
So the beautiful mannequin did as she was told
Never ruffling her skirts
Or mussing her fine tresses

But it wasn't enough for the Big People
Who demanded more from the perfect marionette

Time passed for the China doll
She was hungry for more
Than dancing fairies
And sugar-coated dreams

Turning to the window
Where no fairies danced
She hopped down from the shelf on delicate feet
Drew sweet breath into her colorless face

She frolicked among
The shiny train sets
Plastic army men
And Matchbox cars

Time passed for the China doll
Who had tasted life's sweet treasures
But she became lonely
And longed for the Big People

Her curiosity satisfied, she returned
Her dark locks and creamy face
Kissed by the sunlight
Her lacy gown embraced by summer breezes

But the Big People didn't recognize
Or maybe they didn't see
Her shelf was cleaned
And occupied by a new toy

WOLVERINE
JOLIET
JUNIOR
COLLEGE
GROWING
AND
BECOMING
Kim Vollmer '89